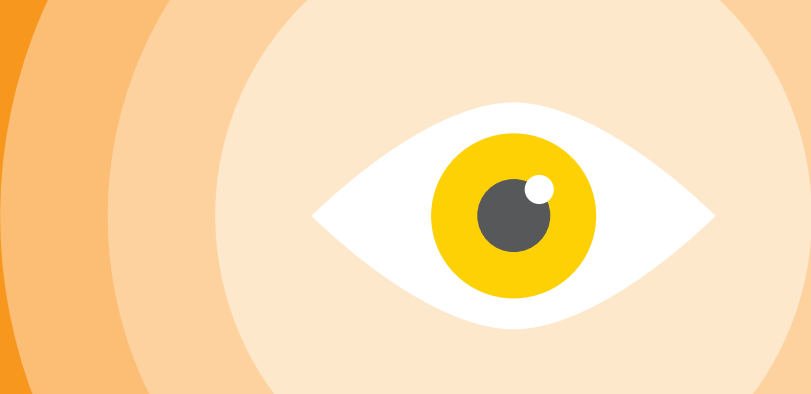


CAUSAL LOOPS



THE CAUSAL LOOPS TOOL HELPS YOU SEE THE CAUSE AND EFFECT RELATIONSHIPS WITHIN A SYSTEM

How to use the tool:

- 1 Think about all the elements in the issue you are exploring and write them on post-it notes.
- 2 Begin to arrange the post-it notes on a large piece of paper.
- 3 Start to draw arrows between the post-it notes to show where there may be a connection. Try to identify some cause and effect relationships. It will be messy because you are exploring the complex connections between lots of different things.
- 4 Use + and - signs to identify the nature of the relationship between the parts. For example, an arrow with a + sign would indicate a relationship where both elements increase together, such as the link between more diesel cars in a city and more air pollution. The - sign indicates a decreasing relationship.
- 5 You may notice that some loops emerge. These can be reinforcing loops or balancing loops.
- 6 Once you have created your map of the issue you will have a better understanding of the underlying relationships that affect how the system works. This deeper understanding will help you identify the things that you might want to try to change. It will also help you map the consequences of any changes that you might make.

NXTHINKING

This tool can help you to think about the nature of relationships in a complex dynamic system

It helps to uncover how the different components in a system influence each other. It is useful to map out the connections so that you can appreciate how changing one thing might impact on many others.

-  Thinking about Connections
-  Thinking about The Big Picture

Based on an idea developed in The Shape of Change by Rob Quaden, Alan Ticotski and Debra Lyneis.

“It was amazing to think about the many different ways that everything is connected.”

