

📅 9 Apr 2025



Causal Mapping: a Garden of Ideas

🌸 Starting to use the Causal Map app and want to know more about the theory and practice of causal mapping? What is it, what is it good for, how can you do it?

🌻 You've skimmed through a couple of our publications but want to see how it all fits together?

🌷 Here you'll find dozens of one-pagers setting out the key ideas in causal mapping as we see it, curated and assembled from existing publications and blog posts. There are also a few longer pre-publication [Working Papers](#).

The titles of most of these "ideas" pages are expressed in the form of a single thought or claim or idea, like "Causal coding is easy to automate".

This Garden also serves as a companion to the [Causal Map app](#). The app has an interactive help system. That help information is also available as the [last chapter of this Garden](#). That last chapter is all about how to use the app whereas the rest of this Garden is a more discursive look at the theory and everything that surrounds causal mapping.

We have also included some of our most popular LinkedIn posts, especially on AI.

🔧 This site is very much a work in progress! A lot more ideas are still to come!

CHAPTERS

■ Articles

Some brief one-page bullet-point summaries of some of our key published papers.

■ Glossary

Some essential terminology for causal mapping.

■ Working Papers

This chapter is a new set of working papers about causal mapping.

■ Causal mapping – overview

What is causal mapping? What are its strengths and weaknesses? How does a causal map differ from a systems diagram? This chapter has some answers.

■ Task 1 – Gathering causal mapping data

At Causal Map we are relatively agnostic about data collection. We are most interested in causal evidence and beliefs derived from different sources.

■ Task 2 – Causal coding – minimalist style

In this chapter we present some of key general principles about how to do causal mapping which we at Causal Map Ltd (and, most of the time, at BathSDR) have adopted.

■ Task 2 & 3 Key ideas and conventions

In the previous chapter [[0.001 Task 2 -- Introduction]] we looked at the main ideas of minimalist coding:

■ Task 3 – Answering questions – General

The fundamental output of causal mapping is a database of causal links. If there are not too many links, this database can be visualised "as-is" in the form of a causal map or network. But usually there are too many links for this to be very useful, so we apply filters.

■ Task 3 – Answering questions – Individual questions

■ Causal mapping in evaluation

Causal mapping has been used in many different fields. In this chapter we look at how it can be applied in evaluation; its strengths and weaknesses.

■ Causal Mapping as QDA

Causal mapping is also a kind of Qualitative Data Analysis (QDA). How does that even work? This chapter explains.

■ Causal Map app and alternatives

This guide shows how to create a simple causal map in **Kumu.io** using a spreadsheet. It includes:

■ Deductive coding with AI

Causal coding is fascinating but can take a lot of time. Using AI to help you is pretty easy, especially if you provide a codebook of factor labels which the AI has to use, as we will explain in this chapter, when we've finished it!

■ Inductive coding with AI

Causal coding is fascinating but can take a lot of time. Using AI to help you is pretty easy, especially if you provide a codebook of factor labels which the AI has to use: `[[000 Intro -- deductive auto-coding]]`.

■ AI in qualitative social science

How can we improve rigour and even reproducibility when using AI in social science? This chapter suggests some answers.

■ Qualia

Qualia is our AI interviewer.

■ Case studies

Here are some examples of work with **Causal Map** and causal mapping, and also with Qualia interviews.

■ AI and the wider world

Here are some thoughts from a couple of years ago when genAI first hit us, plus some thoughts about where we are going with it.

▣▣ Finally

Licenses, how to cite Causal Map, and a [bibliography](#).

▣▣ Causal Map App
