

Causal Layered Analysis

Causal Layered Analysis (also known as the Iceberg Model) is a tool for exploring complex challenges by examining them at multiple depths—from surface events to the underlying beliefs that shape them.

In your group, use the canvas to explore the different underlying causes of your focal societal challenge.

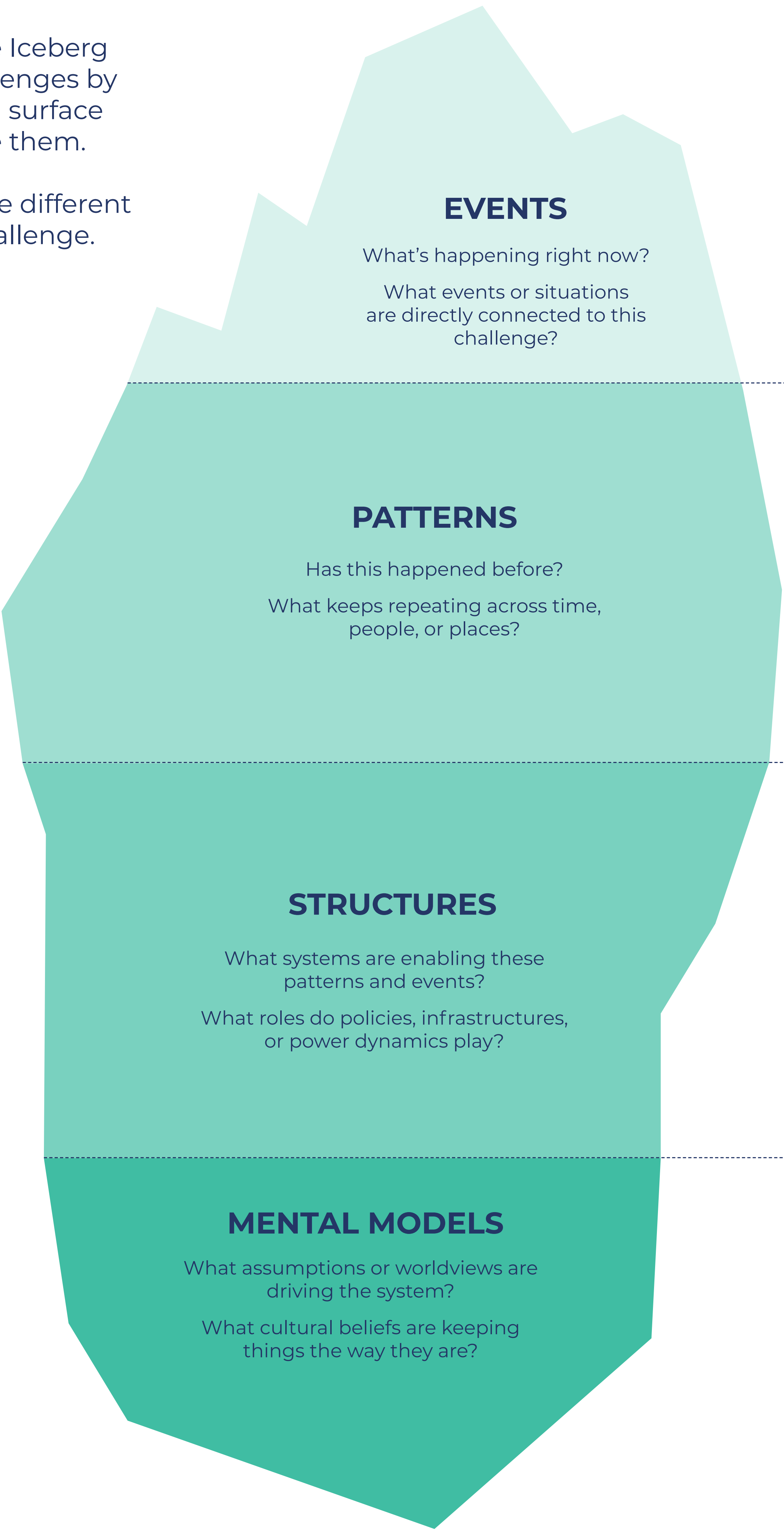
 **Time:** 20 minutes

1 Events
This is the surface layer - what you can **see, hear, or experience**.
Events are the **visible symptoms** of the challenge: news stories, public reactions, or lived experiences.

2 Patterns
At this level, look for **repeated behaviors or trends over time**.
Patterns show that the challenge isn't just a one-time event, but part of a longer-term dynamic.

3 Structures
These are the **systems and institutions** that shape how things work - often **invisible but powerful**.
Structures include laws, policies, technologies, economic models, organizational norms, and decision-making processes.

4 Mental models
This is the deepest layer: the **beliefs, values, and assumptions** that people or societies hold.
The mental models **shape the structures**, which then create patterns and lead to visible events.



Depopulation example

Example:
I am prioritising doing well in my education, career and doing all the things I want to do before I have children.

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Example:
People are having children later in life than they used to.

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Example:
There is limited financial and social support for families which places a big burden on parents e.g. parents paying for private kindergarden.

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Example:
Individualism - the responsibility of raising children is predominantly up to parents.

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