



DIRECT LINKS FROM INTERVENTION TO OUTCOME ARE REAL LINKS TOO

You have a causal map with lots of links from an intervention to a final outcome. It's a really impressive chain.

Then a stakeholder comes along and draws a direct link from intervention to outcome, saying "these trainings are great, they caused the law to get changed!"

You can also create consensus causal maps directly, and in these cases these cheeky direct links are often ignored or curated out of the way. When coding individual sources, and source X says $A \rightarrow B \rightarrow C$ and then source Y says $A \rightarrow C$ it is very tempting to recode source X as if they were really saying $A \rightarrow B \rightarrow C$.

For example when source X says

Thanks to the training, our skills increased and so we were able to manage the outreach work better

.... and source Y only says

Thanks to the training we were able to manage the outreach work better

... it is very tempting to add the intermediate factor to source Y's story too *even if they did not actually mention it*. If you're going to do that, you should document when and how this is allowed and why.