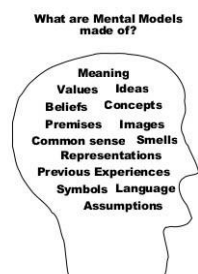


# MENTAL MODELS

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## What are Mental Models?



*“Mental models are deeply held internal images of how the world works, images that limit us to familiar ways of thinking and acting. Very often, we are not consciously aware of our mental models or the effects they have on our behavior.”*

- Peter Senge

The General Council sent us a video (RSCJ U Process – Part B, February 2018) where they shared with us how they visualised, using U Theory, the path of discernment towards our future that will culminate in the Special General Chapter 2021. We have uploaded this video into the tool box in the section called “Other suggested resources”.

Working with mental models takes us to the bottom of the U and we do it now, after the first stage of preparation for the Special Chapter 2021 (the Dreamcatcher Process), where we had the opportunity to “connect” with reality and “observe” the system with new eyes. A new way of looking that we have shared with each other in groups.

Working with mental models takes us to the “perception” stage: shadows, plans that prevent us from letting go in order to be more agile and dynamic for mission (specifically related to ways of organising ourselves and sharing resources). It is about perceiving all of this, according to what we have seen and said that we have to let go... Working with mental models is an opportunity to become aware of our resistances. It is an opportunity to become aware that wishing for one thing, collectively we are generating something else. This is because we are operating from specific mental models, from patterns that do not let us move forward.

**This material** we are offering, is designed to be done in groups and is oriented to the one who facilitates the process. It is important that the person who will facilitate the work of the group, makes it her own, and facilitates the process according to the characteristics of the group and the time available.

We believe that the process has to be guided by someone who is familiar with the material, who can guide the steps of the process and keep the search and the dialogue on the right track, so as not to lose sight of the goal.

We want groups to walk together, not to be discussion groups; in this way we will accompany each other in a process, not a task, so that we accompany each other in the experience and challenge of opening mind, heart and will, looking ahead to the Special Chapter 2021 with its two topics: new ways of organising ourselves, and sharing resources.

Even though this is designed to be done in groups, we would like this material to enable a personal process, because for there to be a collective transformation there must be a personal transformation. We invite you to enter into mental models from this perspective.

Those of us who have designed these materials are not specialists, but we have used the process and we are learning all the time, in the degree to which we enter into the work of mental models from our own personal and group experience.

## **OBJECTIVES**

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1. Open the mind, heart and will keeping the Special Chapter 2021 in view, and taking into account the two topics of discernment that concern us: new ways of organising ourselves and sharing resources.
2. Identify, as a group, the personal and group mental models that we rscj have as an organization, as a Body, in order to find new ways of organising OURSELVES (not organising MYSELF) in order to make life and mission more agile in the future.
3. Identify the mental models that prevent or hinder us from opening our mind, heart and will to move forward in the two themes of chapter 2021.
4. Start working on any of the mental models that the group has formulated.

## **VIDEOS AND PPT TO WORK ON MENTAL MODELS**

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1. **PPT:** guide of the whole process. (02\_Mental\_Models\_Guide\_ENG)
2. **OVERVIEW EFFECT** (19 minutes)  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CHMlfOecrlo>
3. **SIREN SONGS** (03\_siren\_songs\_ENG,5 minutes)
4. 04\_Siren\_songs\_ENG
5. **Video: Tutorial of the second stage of the process:** Explore the iceberg: name our mental models. (05\_Mental\_Models\_ENG)

## **PROPOSAL FOR WORKING WITH MENTAL MODELS**

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The dynamics are designed to be done sequentially, procedurally, not in isolation. Similarly, the process is designed to be done with the same group of people, so a personal and group journey is possible.

### **1. WE SET OUT ON THE ROAD.**

In this first moment of the process we begin with an intuitive and guided approach to mental models.

#### **1.1 Watch the video "Overview effect".**

**Objective:** "Turn the camera around", look at ourselves within the system. We are part of this system.

#### **Personal reflection:**

Look at ourselves, visualise ourselves in our daily lives (as if we were turning the camera around and seeing ourselves from the outside) and start looking at: what are our reactions, answers, things that we think "should be like this", "they need to change," assumptions, stereotypes about subjects, people or groups (like an old fashioned record that is stuck, the needle keeps at the same spot), things we repeat or tell ourselves a lot internally, things we usually say.

## 1.2 Watch the video “Siren Songs” (from the film Ulysses).

*Ulysses, king of Ithaca, comes back home after fighting for years in the bloody war of Troy. His way back will be full of dangers that will prevent him from meeting again with his wife Penelope. The encounter with a Cyclops and his subsequent brawl will enrage the gods, who will try to hinder the return of the Greek hero. The evil sirens, the evil witch Circe, among others, will be responsible for ending Ulysses' journey. Adaptation of 'The Odyssey', Homer's famous novel that tells the journey and adventures of Ulysses after the Trojan War. In this scene, Ulysses faces the voices of those sirens who want to seduce him and divert him from his path, endangering his life and his goal. They are pleasant, ordinary, convincing voices that are hard to resist ... but that "under the guise of being for his good" could end his life and mission.*

**Objective:** listen to our “siren songs”, both personal and as rscj.

### **Personal reflection:**

For the personal work, it is not so much about thinking a lot but about listening a lot and "applying" our feelings. It's about listening to ourselves from that visualisation that we did when we “turned the camera around”.

We can place ourselves in our communities (in formal and informal conversations), in recent meetings or group meetings that we have had with other RSCJ, or in work teams, in provincial assemblies, in group discernments, etc.

For personal reflection a sheet is attached (Siren songs (MM reflected in our voices)) that may help us to collect “our siren songs”, those voices that we have in our lives when we say or tell ourselves sentences that begin with: “Well...”, “but ...”, “I should ...”, “always ...”, “never ...”, “all ...”, “nobody ...”, “it cannot be done ...”, etc.

And equally, we will recognise our voices as RSCJ: things we usually think or say.

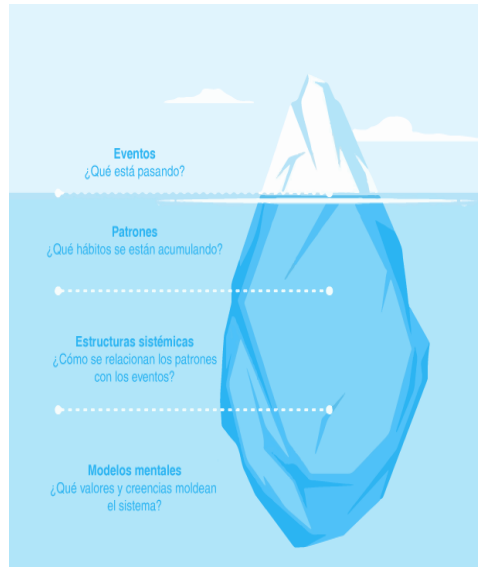
### **Group work:**

- ✓ Each person speaks and we listen to her.
- ✓ After all have shared, we have a quiet moment and then we share one word, feeling or image that we are left with have heard everyone.
- ✓ Once we have all shared a word, feeling or image, we have a few minutes of dialogue about the content of what we have discovered.
- ✓ In the end each one repeats something from the dialogue and expresses gratitude for it.

## 2. EXPLORE THE ICEBERG: NAME OUR MENTAL MODELS.

### **Objectives:**

- ✓ Explore the layers of this iceberg together, to discover and name our mental models as RSCJ and what we would need to change to let go.
- ✓ Start generating a change process.
- ✓ Challenge our own assumptions, prejudices, etc. and listen more profoundly, listen to the deepest voice.



Many of us participated in the Dreamcatcher process. We have talked about things that we ought to change: to let go in order to make our live more agile and dynamic for mission.

We understand MENTAL MODEL as an organised pattern of thinking and preconceived ideas. It is our particular way of thinking and seeing the world, which guides our emotions and conditions our behaviour unconsciously.

To interact with our context we need to develop patterns or ideas from it. The mental models are modified according to our experience; we replace some mental models with others that are more convincing.

This second stage of the process has four steps. The first two are intended to help us discover patterns, values and beliefs (mental models) that lie behind the contexts, situations, places, structures, etc. that we have named as places of change in the Dreamcatcher process. The purpose of the last two steps is to increase awareness of the effects that these patterns, values and beliefs have on our lives.

**NAME OUR MENTAL MODELS**

**OUR CONTEXTS AS RSCJ:  
THINGS THAT HAPPEN - THINGS WE TH**

**VALUES AND BELIEFS THAT WE DISCOVER  
UNDERNEATH THESE "PATTERNS" OF ACTION  
THOUGHT**

**WHAT DO EACH OF THESE MENTAL MODELS OFFER?  
WHAT DO EACH OF THESE MENTAL MODELS HINDER OR  
PREVENT?  
WHOM DO THEY BENEFIT?**

### STEP 1:

- a) The person who facilitates the group selects a set of topics or areas recognised by the group that need to change in some way – personal, group or community . it could be helpful to pick out some of those named in the Dreamcatcher reflection process. She writes them on coloured sheets and hangs them on the wall.

If there is no awareness (personal, group) that there has to be a process of change, it will be very difficult to detect mental models because the need to change them is not recognised.

Here are some example topics:

- ✓ Structures of the Province (communities, areas, commissions, groups...)
  - ✓ Structures of the Society (Provinces, regions, international commissions...)
  - ✓ Spaces for reflection, search, dialogue, formation
  - ✓ Sharing resources
  - ✓ Personal and group processes
  - ✓ Leadership, roles, government structures (provincial, provincial council, superiors, community leaders...)
  - ✓ Power and authority
  - ✓ Shared mission and lay people
  - ✓ Meetings and gatherings
  - ✓ Mission projects
- b) Individually and from our own experience, we write, on yellow post-its, things that usually happen with regard to the topic or area we have chosen, recurring patterns.. Each person uses as many post-its as she needs and places them in the corresponding paper on the wall.
- On orange post-its, we write things that we think, things that in general are a shared thought, from our perception, related to those areas or topics.

### STEP 2:

- a) Together we look at each post-it. We dialogue, without prioritising each topic, about what values or beliefs lie behind those patterns, ways of acting or living, or thoughts that we have read in the post-its (either yellow or orange).
- b) We write in a big sheet of paper the common threads that we discover, connecting those that are similar. **These are our mental models, from where we move and act.**

It is important to formulate as clearly as possible the identified mental models (values and beliefs) and do it without fear.

**Remember what we understand as mental model.**

We understand as MENTAL MODEL an organised pattern of preconceived thinking and ideas. It is our particular way of thinking and seeing the world, which guides our emotions and conditions our behaviour unconsciously.
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### **STEP 3:**

We stay with each mental model we have identified as a group and is part of us as RSCJ and we ask ourselves:

- ✓ What do each of these mental models offer?
- ✓ What do each of these mental models hinder or prevent?
- ✓ Whom do they benefit?

### **STEP 4:**

It is time to pick up, in a short sentence, what I have I been aware of in this process?

## **3. PROPOSAL OF PRAYER**

**Objective:** See how Jesus had mental models that hindered him from opening himself to new realities and how, listening to the reality, he let himself be transformed.

### **Mk 7, 24-30: Jesus and Syrophenician woman**

- ✓ Each person sits as she chooses in order to be able to listen the dialogue of Jesus and the Syrophenician woman.
- ✓ Somebody reads the text aloud.
- ✓ I decide where I place myself: among the people, as the woman, as the woman's daughter, as Jesus. I recreate the scene and the conversation.
- ✓ I place myself as the Syrophenician woman and write, without thinking, what she thinks, feels, says... the woman.
- ✓ I place myself as Jesus and write, without thinking, what he thinks, feels, says... Jesus.
- ✓ Imagine yourself dialoguing with Jesus about the mental models we have formulated in the group. What do you say to him? What is the mental model that has most caught your attention? Why? What effects has this mental model on you? What would you like to change in yourself so that it does not limit you personally or the group, as a result of the way you live this mental model? What does Jesus say to you?

## **4. WE BEGIN TO WORK TO TRANSFORM OUR REALITY**

**Objective:** work personally with one mental model and begin to generate a process of personal and group transformation.

- a) Choose one mental model of those named in the group and ask myself:
  - ✓ What steps would I have to take to change this mental model in myself?
  - ✓ What steps would the Province, this group, the Society of the Sacred Heart have to take to change this mental model?
- b) "Write" visually, that is, with images, symbols, colours ... the steps I could take to change the chosen mental model. It can be expressed through a visual thinking.
- c) Share it with the group.
- d) From here, we can accompany each other as a group, as each group decides best, on the steps that each person will take, in our searches and commitment to change, etc.