

## What are Systemic Constellations?

Systemic constellations are a way of working with issues within human systems. Developed by Bert Hellinger, a German psychotherapist, they originally focused on family systems to disclose the deeper forces that unknowingly influence our thoughts, behaviors and emotional experiences through multiple generations. Family Constellations create a model of the family system to reveal and transform hidden patterns that are difficult to understand and change.

Over time this systemic approach has been applied to other human systems including organizations, our connection to nature and larger issues in our communities and the world. Together these Systemic Constellations approaches explore ways for understanding our relationships as well as giving us options to resolve our most complicated problems.

In Systemic Constellations, we set up a model of a system with volunteer representatives, objects or guided visualizations. In a typical workshop, participants are chosen to represent members or elements of the family or organization that is being addressed. In this process hidden and unexpected dynamics operating within the system are revealed and addressed in a way that aims to find a healthy and respectful place for all members of the system in question.

A powerful insight of Bert Hellinger is that each family system has a conscience that requires that all members be connected and remembered in a particular way. If someone in the system is not remembered correctly then younger members, out of love or the need to belong, can become "entangled" with their ancestors, particularly with those who have been excluded, forgotten or shunned or have experienced a difficult fate. Unconscious entanglements are behind many of the issues that are explored in these constellations.

During the process, we search for possible solutions that can release entanglements and restore order and balance to the family system. The process provides the client with a new image of their place in the family system with the proper honor to the ancestors and to the events. Exploring what is hidden in our family system can help us to heal our deepest wounds and transform in areas of our lives where we have otherwise felt stuck in immovable patterns of behavior or belief.

Systemic Constellations take place in what is often referred to as the "unified field" or "knowing field." This is the energetic matrix that connects family, ancestors, organizational members, the natural world and all of humanity. This "knowing field" is a conscious energy that we can enter to experience the feelings and sensations that mirror those of the actual family members or entities being represented and everyone and everything to which we are connected.

British biologist Rupert Sheldrake explains this field phenomenon, which he calls a "morphogenetic field," as an organizing force that accounts for patterns of behavior in social

groups, such as schools of fish and flocks of birds. Dr. Albrecht Mahr first used the term "the knowing field" to describe this energy field as it applies to human family systems. He referred to the experience through which volunteers in a constellation session access information about a family system as "representative perception."

During a Systemic Constellation, representatives begin to take on the essential qualities of who or what they are representing, and begin to sense thoughts, emotions, and physical sensations through the "knowing field". They are able to reveal what is true even if they have no prior knowledge of what has occurred historically.

A key part of the Systemic Constellation process is the use of healing sentences that speak the essential truth of entanglements or issues. There can also be powerful sentences that bring a resolution and a compassionate restoration of balance to the system. Bert Hellinger created many sentences that are still effective, but new ones are created spontaneously during the process. Healing sentences are transformative when spoken in the right moment.

Organizational Constellations are an evolution of Family Constellations that can reveal the hidden dynamics in companies and other kinds of organizations and community systems. Organizational facilitators can set up representatives to look at leadership issues, conflict resolution between colleagues, dynamics between founders and successors, relationships between various stakeholders, challenges of innovation and organizational restructuring. This approach can also be used to discover a deeper understanding and resolution for larger social, cultural, ethnic and racial issues by shifting perceptions, creating new insights and uncovering different forms of action for moving forward.

Nature Constellations can explore the relationship between human systems, natural systems and the earth. They explore the interconnectedness between the health of human systems and the larger natural world. These constellations often include elements of indigenous peoples' insight into nature, shamanism, ecology and other environmental perspectives. They can include global environmental issues, individual relationships with nature, using resources, dynamics with animals and plants, and insights and wisdom from being in nature that support a deeper understanding of family systems.

Systemic Constellations are an innovative approach to the hidden dynamics that influence our lives that has a solid foundation originally developed by Bert Hellinger. They are continually applied in ways that reflect the creativity and insight of each facilitator and their growing understanding of the natural laws that govern human systems and the complexity of human life on planet earth.