

Preparing For a Family Systemic Constellation Day Workshop

Preparing as a participant; a representative or for your own constellation

Try to be well rested, with a clear mind and body.

You don't have to do your own constellation. You will get a lot out of being a participant; a representative and by sitting in the holding circle and it is common for representatives to encounter their own issues when representing in someone else's constellation.

Clarify your question in terms of yourself: Set up a family constellation only when there is a true need, curiosity alone is not sufficient. It can be helpful to formulate a clear, simple sentence describing what you *hope will be different in you and in how you approach the issue* after doing the constellation.

It is useful to know the basic facts about your family: Think about who belongs to your family system. Consider who are your parents, grandparents, siblings, aunts, and uncles. Who had particular fates i.e., dying young, miscarriages, stillbirths, having chronic illnesses or major traumas? Avoid characterisations, interpretations, as they interfere with the ability of representatives to sense the effect of family dynamics. Orient yourself to the *feel* of the family setting.

Those included in the system are:

1. Parents, grandparents, and great-grandparents and ancestors even further back.
2. Brothers and sisters, sometimes aunts and uncles.
3. Children, including any who died young, including stillbirths, miscarriages, and abortions.
5. Anybody, and this is most important, who made room in some way for the above members. This includes, for example, former partners of parents or grandparents, as well as all those whose misfortune or death or actions brought the family an advantage or gain.
6. Victims of violence and murder in the family or by any members of the family.
7. Sometimes people who have saved the life of a family member.

Understand that being a representative does not involve acting in any way. It is not playing a role but rather standing in a particular person's position. You simply report the sensations feelings, and impulses that spontaneously arise in you. Gather yourself, don't have any intentions, allow the position to affect you, concentrate your attention on your reactions and sensations, trust them as they come and report these clearly and concisely.

On the day, please wear comfortable layered clothing so that you can adjust for individual temperature preferences. If possible, be prepared to kindly remove shoes for soft touch and awareness of your feet on the floor. Bring your own lunch, healthy snacks and drinks provided.

This information can be useful but is not essential if you decide to do a constellation.

Following a Family Systemic Constellation Workshop

Following a constellation as a participant or after your own constellation

Experiencing a family constellation: In a constellation we receive new insights and healing images in a non-verbal way. We absorb them directly through the senses. We see new images of our family and we feel how new dynamics feel in our bodies. This goes much deeper than ideas put into words. These experiences can affect our relationship with our family in a way that seems effortless. It has a profound impact that can give our lives new direction. This kind of *nourishing process moves slowly* but surely through ourselves and our family system. All participants; in the holding circle, representatives, seeker may be heartfully touched and receive insights that can help individually in our growth toward our true selves and potential.

Momentum for healing: Constellations are helpful for the movement and momentum for healing that they create for healing in real life rather than reaching good resolutions. Don't worry if your constellation has not reached a full resolution.

Processing: Sometimes verbal processing can keep us stuck at the level of the problem, stopping us from embracing the solution. Thoughts are quick. Often, we seem to have accurate insights into the causes of the problems that exist in our lives and with our families, while still remaining completely stuck. We can use analysis to distance ourselves from our direct sensory experience. Imagine enjoying a beautiful sunset and then analysing the scientific phenomena that produce such an optical event; it removes us from the direct experience of the sunset. The thinking distracts us from our experience of the colours and shapes. Any experience that is not included in the intellectual discussion disappears from consciousness. We may forget about our emotional response to the sunset. The facilitator may suggest a short break from the group to allow softening of the experience within you, allowing space for the process to gently deepen.

Similarly, it is better not to try to analyse our own constellation. Immediately after your own constellation, spend some quiet time by yourself to allow this process to begin while the experience is still fresh. Rather it is better to replay images in our mind and especially to remember the healing movements and images and the feelings that go with them. We can satisfy our intellectual mind by thinking about other peoples' constellations. With our own constellation, it is better to encourage the experience to go as deep as possible.

When we go home from the workshop, we need to be careful telling others about our experience. It is very difficult to explain constellations to those who have not experienced them. It is normal for many people to

be skeptical about something that is so far outside of their normal experience and that is so challenging to our usual way of perceiving the world. Even when sympathetic, many people will try to engage you in an analytical conversation which can disconnect you from the healing image of the constellation. It is best to wait for a while before trying to talk about it.

Seeing our family system: A skilled practitioner may make suggestions to focus our healing image. This may include focusing on one particular element of the constellation, such as seeing our siblings in birth order, or feeling our parents physically supporting us from behind. It may also include acts to help us reincorporate or acknowledge a forgotten family member, such as displaying their photo in our home, visiting their grave or doing some other meaningful ritual for you. Other than these acts of awareness, we don't need to do anything specific with the constellation for it to have its effect. This work helps us to become more deeply connected with all the members of our family system, living and dead. The healing effects of the work unfold in their own time when we let go of the need to do something.

Conscious love: As a result of our constellation, we come closer to holding all those who belong to our family in conscious love. We respect their fates and their burdens as their own. We can then give up the childlike loyalties where love and belonging meant living out the consequences of another's life - which have only served to entangle us. Unnecessary suffering is therefore replaced with acknowledging what actually is.

Patience: Whatever occurs in a constellation, usually should not be used as a recipe for your behaviour around the people represented in the constellation. Rather, we simply let it work within us and we may find ourselves spontaneously acting in different ways, than has been our usual past patterns. We may find ourselves getting in contact with previously distanced family members. We may find ourselves being more assertive or more conciliatory than before. Whatever the change in behaviour, it is likely that we will feel a greater sense of relaxation and connection. We may even feel more alive.

Confidentiality: Be mindful and trustworthy with your own and other's words, thoughts, feelings, individual and family situations as we relate, experience, perceive, and to keep confidentiality for the days processes with respect for one another.

Adapted by Karena from Maria Dolenc who adapted from Constellation Flow; Hellinger, Bert. Love's Hidden Symmetry. 1998. With additions by Karena Coller (Denford).