Systemic Constellations

"Every generation blames the one before..."

Mike & the Mechanics, *The Living Years*

What can you do when, despite a deepening self-awareness and possibly years of personal development work, some painful and life-limiting patterns still continue to surface and affect you? It might just be that the root of the problem lies not only with you but also belongs to someone else in your wider family system. If that's the case, then a Systemic Constellation can be extremely helpful. We spoke to Gaye Donaldson, systemic constellations facilitator and Director and Faculty Member of the Centre for Systemic Constellations to find out more about this valuable and powerful work.

'Geoff was in his mid 60s when he came to do a Systemic Constellation. He'd had a lonely childhood, abandoned by his mother and passed from pillar to post and it seemed to him that he was always being "got rid of". He felt unloved and unlovable.

Through doing a Constellation, Geoff was able to see for the first time that his mother had loved him deeply, parting from him with unbearable grief and pain, only because she wished to protect him from the TB that she carried. She had not held her son to protect him from the contagion that had killed so many of her family. During the workshop, he experienced for the first time the depth of his mother's love and the self-sacrifice that had ensured his survival.'

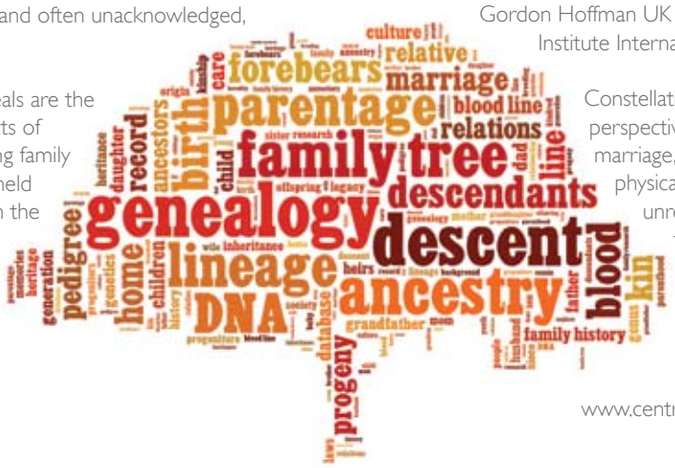
Systemic Constellations, developed by the German philosopher and psychotherapist Bert Hellinger, provide a solution-focused process for addressing personal, family and work-related issues in an original and rather wonderful way. This whole-system approach differs from other forms of therapy in that it explores each person's place in the system to which they belong, rather than simply focusing on the individual in an isolated way. These systems may be our current family or our family of origin, our workplace or even the environment in which we live. While we each have our own personal history we are also, inevitably, deeply connected with our wider familial, social and cultural history, which exerts a strong, and often unacknowledged, influence over us.

What Constellation work reveals are the hidden loyalties to the huge acts of fate or painful losses in our long family history, issues that are deeply held and can manifest themselves in the way we lead our lives today.

Gaye has been involved with Systemic work for over 20 years and leads workshops throughout the world. 'At a Systemic Constellations workshop participants can either bring their own issue to explore or simply participate as an element or representative in another person's Constellation. This issue may be personal or it may relate to their family, career or business. By using members of the group to create a 'living map' of any issue or situation, simple but hidden truths can be revealed and understood, giving new insight and opportunities for change and movement. When we're supported in seeing the widest possible view of our story, we're able to see what we've inherited and 'hand back' issues to those in our ancestral field to whom they belong'.

Systemic constellations are an effective tool in the resolution of interpersonal problems in both families and organisations and has been successfully used in educational establishments, health care, prisons and other social services. This process can be used to focus on restructuring, communication, team motivation, harassment, ethical questions, decision making, strategic issues and mission statements.

"My own experience of this work, both personally and professionally has been powerful and effective. Constellation work has helped Hoffman diagnose vital, underlying issues that have held back our growth and shed light on the healing possibilities that had previously remained obscure". Serena Gordon Hoffman UK co-founder and Hoffman Institute International affiliate.



Constellations can also reveal a different perspective on issues relating to marriage, relationships, addictions, physical and mental illnesses, adoption, unresolved grief, employment, financial problems, family inheritance and cultural differences.

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