

Systemic & Family Constellations

is a healing tradition that has some very important roots in the Zulu culture of South Africa. It has been developed and also carries the more European influences of depth psychology. I recently learned that Bert Hellinger's biggest influence along his constellations path were both the Old and New Testaments of the Holy Bible, as Bert spent many years as a Priest, and grew up as a progressive Jesuit. What drew me to constellations was its deeply experiential aspects, as it clearly parallels indigenous ritual and wisdom practices concerning family lineages and love.

Constellation Work makes use of the WEB OF ENERGETIC BONDS that exist between members of family groups and the ways that *unresolved issues are passed from one generation to another*. In a family constellation, such wounds and disturbances can find resolution that ripples OUT and affects not only those who participate but others that are connected to that family group in ways none of us can completely explain but that predictably bring *clarity, health, and peace*.

In-Person Family/Systemic Constellation groups need to have 14 - 18 participants to work best. One person who would like to have their constellation done (the Client) provides his or her STORY or problem and with the help of the Facilitator, selects people to represent elements of the STORY or issue that they would like to experience some healing with. The Client then arranges the representatives within the circle, where they "belong" in relation to each other, according to the Client's feeling sense. At that point, the Client sits down to watch and the energy of the family system begins to flow through the participants, each representing a part of the Client's STORY.

The facilitator's job is to help the representatives express what they are feeling and experiencing and what they need in order to alleviate any perceived unease, to speak what needs to be spoken, or to repair some long-forgotten hurt. The facilitator offers healing sentences that help to shift the energy, and the representative tests out the sentence and all can observe the effect. Toward the end of the constellation, the Client takes the place of his/her representative in order to absorb the energy of the new constellation, and to feel the effects of the process. An important part of the healing process involves ancestors who often can help because of their unique perspective and deep love.

Constellations leave participants feeling changed, often reporting feeling things shifting and reaching greater integration in the physical body; a deeper, very resonant feeling that their problems are changed somehow, recognizing at a new level that they are not alone.

A relatively private, quiet, comfortable space is needed to have a successful constellation circle, one big enough to seat 14-18 people, either in chairs in a circle or with cushions around the edge of the room, with a space in the middle that is big enough for people to move around in without feeling crowded. Constellations can take place outside in nature when weather permits, allowing nature elements to show up as additional representatives and healing forces. We begin and end the process in a circle where people share a little about themselves so that we can connect with the others in the group and set the stage for a trusting, connected experience for everyone. Especially since Covid-19, facilitators have been offering online constellations, as well. The environment of the group and the format will depend on the facilitator.

*If you like, check it out on Netflix. There is a Turkish series called **Another Self**, where you can get an idea of what this practice looks like, and what you might expect if you participate.*

Toni Rahman, LCSW is a licensed counselor and the author of several books and a [blog](#). Also known as Traveling Healer, she has made her home in Mexico and Bangladesh for significant portions of her adult life. Her specialties include trauma and attachment, spirituality and the body-mind-spirit connection. Her passions include Eastern and indigenous healing practices, psychology, and gender issues, as well as issues of social and economic justice. She is passionate about promoting deep and meaningful connections in the context of healing community and exploring ways to support herself and others in making profound shifts in their life experience. She is a Trauma-Informed Care Practitioner, a Certified EMDR Practitioner, trained in CranioSacral Therapy and SomatoEmotional Release, Chinese Five Element Theory, Dream Interpretation, Quantum Touch and Energy Balancing. She now lives near her family in Central Missouri, where she facilitates regular Family Constellations circles and has a small private practice. You can learn more about her by visiting her online [here](#).