

## **THE CHALLENGE AND PROMISE FOR PSYCHODRAMA OF SYSTEMIC CONSTELLATION WORK**

By Ronald Anderson and Karen Carnabucci

**Systemic Family Constellation Work – sometimes called Systemic Constellation Work – is a phenomenological experiential approach developed by Bert Hellinger in the 1970s in Germany to address the traumatic effects passed to the descendants of the Nazi perpetrators and Jewish and other victims after World War II. The methodology has grown into an international movement which is comparable to psychodrama. Here we discuss the newer method, alluding to the challenges and possibilities that it poses psychodrama.**

A growing number of helping professionals around the world are employing Systemic Family Constellation Work, an experiential intergenerational healing process developed by Bert Hellinger, a former Roman Catholic priest and missionary who was trained in psychoanalysis and exposed to various therapeutic modalities of the 1960s and '70s. Systemic Family Constellation Work looks remarkably like psychodrama – yet also has great differences. More psychodramatists are experimenting in various ways with ideas from Systemic Family Constellation Work, integrating them with psychodramatic enactment for healing, organizational development and personal growth. They report the action goes more deeply, the resolutions often coming more quickly.

Constellation work is based on the notion that people are connected by unseen energetic forces, not only in the here and now but also across time and space. It expands upon the theories that J.L. Moreno, the developer of psychodrama, pioneered with his writings on tele and co-consciousness as well as other modern writings about what has come to be called energy medicine (Hunt, 1996).

When Moreno met Martin Buber in a café in Vienna in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, they discussed their observations that a certain connection can occur between people, regardless of the length of time that they have been acquainted. Although Moreno and Buber could not explain such chemistry in this likely apocryphal story (Hollander, 1980), Moreno later coined the word *tele* for this mysterious connection, defining it as the ability to feel into the actuality of another person, experiencing the person in the present moment, without distortion or contamination by previous experience, differentiating it from clinical transference.

Through the years, Moreno continued to refine his ideas and theories about tele. Although he never totally abandoned the inherent mystery of the concept, he responded to criticism (1959) that there was no rationale for tele by developing the categories for measurement that is the basis of sociometric measurement. His tome “Who Shall Survive?” came from that effort to satisfy his scientifically oriented colleagues.

The development of quantum physics, particularly the innovative work of biologist Rupert Sheldrake (1988), established the theory of morphic fields and morphic resonance

which promotes a vision of a living, developing universe with its own inherent memory. Sheldrake's work theorized that social groups are likewise organized by fields, as in schools of fish and flocks of birds. How does a flock of geese turn instantaneously, for instance, without any external sign of communication from the lead goose? Sheldrake's answer is that any particular body of related parts, in this case a flock of geese, have a morphic resonance among its members.

Hellinger discovered another aspect of morphic resonance when he set up representatives — auxiliaries in psychodramatic parlance — of a particular intergenerational family system in a sociometric configuration. Even though the representatives did not have conscious knowledge of particular family relationships, they become resonant to the interplay of “telic” energies, making it obvious to an audience that whatever happens within the group is not random. In Systemic Family Constellation, the space has come to be called “the knowing field” (Ulsamer, 2002) in that representatives have access to knowledge and feelings about the people they represent. Although there is no scene involving a concrete time or place, representatives on stage become alive with energy, and the audience often becomes mesmerized by it.

As Hellinger discovered in his work with the descendants of the adversaries of World War II, traumatic energies appear to be passed to the next generation. French psychodramatist Anne Ancelin Schutzenberger came to a similar conclusion when she noted in her psychodramatic work that patterns played out in previous generations can play out all over again in the current generations (1998); she also participated in a videotape with Hellinger and Sheldrake (2002) comparing thoughts and observations on this phenomena.

### **Comparing Psychodrama and Systemic Family Constellation**

The basics of psychodrama are well known. The group leader, called the director, facilitates a group that begins with a warm-up activity, designed to aid in building trust among group members and creating a readiness for action. At some point, a protagonist is selected for the group by the director to address a personal but representative issue in dramatic action. The protagonist in turn selects members of the group to serve as auxiliaries – people who are willing to play roles in the upcoming drama – and the drama begins. The protagonist typically role reverses with these auxiliaries to “train” them how to play each role, and a good auxiliary will imitate body posture, language and delivery when he or she takes the role, improvising as the drama continues. The drama moves through multiple scenes with the protagonist at the forefront of the action until a closing scene is determined. When the drama concludes, all group members return to their seats for a session of sharing – auxiliaries sharing what it was like to play the role, and all group members telling how what they have heard and observed relates to their own life stories and experiences.

In Systemic Family Constellation, the work also begins with a group. Group members are typically seated on chairs in a circle with empty space in the center, where the work takes place. Some kind of simple introduction, or exercise, is used to begin the group; for

instance, the facilitator may go around the circle and give opportunity to each person to say what he or she is feeling, in a few words. When a group member is chosen to address a personal issue with the facilitator, other group members are asked to represent people in the person's intergenerational family system. When group members take the roles of family members and that of the client, no training is necessary to play roles. The person who has identified an issue to be explored – called the client — stands behind each representative and slowly and meditatively positions each person in the inner circle in relation to the other family members. When all are positioned, the client returns to his or her seat to watch. Representatives are asked to become open to whatever feelings, insistent thoughts or strong impulses to move on stage arise, being able to report to the group their movements or inner experiences to what is taking place.

It appears this matrix of energy interacts powerfully at an unconscious level, what Hellinger calls the family “soul,” emerging into consciousness onstage. Representatives may develop unusual physical symptoms, burst into anger at particular representatives on stage, cry over one other, fall to the floor as if dead or fainting, move away from the rest, contort themselves, head for the door or in some cases, wail and scream, all without obvious context – yet obviously led in some kind of congruent way with other representatives. The mood of the audience watching a Constellation is generally somber or meditative. Although the work deals with emotions, they don't seem to overwhelm either the person working or the persons watching. Emotions are experienced naturally like you might feel when touched while watching a play or movie.

Once the origin of the current issue in the family system is revealed on stage, a solution is sought by repositioning representatives, adding simple healing sentences, or rituals such as lying prostrate on the floor in front of a representative or bowing to a representative. Resolution is found when a sense of calm is brought to all representatives of the family system as well as the audience.

Representatives return to their seats for a few moments of silence afterward. The effect of achieving peace is taken in by the group. Sharing about the experience is discouraged, so all group members, including the person whose work was enacted, have time for the energy and feelings in the room to settle. In the quiet, there is reverence and appreciation for the work just completed.

### **The Background of Bert Hellinger**

Hellinger traveled throughout Europe and the United States in the 1970s to study such diverse therapeutic methods as the primal therapy of Arthur Janov, the hypnotic work of Milton Erickson, the provocative therapy of Frank Farrelly, Fritz Perls' Gestalt therapy, Virginia Satir's family sculpture and the family systems work of Ruth McClendon and Les Kadis, among others. He had already learned group dynamics — as well as indigenous peoples' ancestor reverence — both as a school principal and missionary in South Africa. Trained as a psychoanalyst, he'd already picked up on the work of Eric Berne and must have become familiar with psychodrama at this time, since his work has many elements similar to psychodrama, especially action sociometry and group practice.

When Hellinger returned to Europe, he led several psychotherapy groups during the week, each operating from a different theoretical model. His work eventually evolved, merging into a methodology designed to heal patients' wounds stemming from the trauma of Adolf Hitler's domination of Europe and World War II. He called his new model "constellation work."

Ursula Franke, an educator and Hellinger protégé, acknowledges that Hellinger owes much to Moreno, in providing the foundations for Systemic Family Constellation with one difference: Although Moreno's encounters take place in the here and now, Hellinger moves to a level free of time and space. Franke points out that Hellinger does not have a real time span to work with, but an "inner" time and structure that is always available (Franke, 2003). Representatives do not need information about whom they are portraying or the situation itself. Information about personalities is not elicited in the initial interview; in fact, such information is intentionally avoided.

Still, lack of information does not seem to hinder the movement of the work, or the knowing field. When Tim, for example, was asked by Lester, the client, to represent Lester's father, only a minimal amount of information had been presented. Lester had said he was suffering from an inability to feel emotions and had felt especially distant from his father. He also reported that his mother died of cancer when he was a boy at the age of 10.

Tim, as the father, was placed on the stage looking away from the person representing the client's mother. His son, the representative for the client Lester, was placed behind Tim, out of Tim's sight. Tim stood in his position for several minutes, feeling nothing and looking straight ahead. He waited, until he could "feel into" the role, as advised by the facilitator. Then he started to develop a tic in his face and neck – a completely unexpected response. The client, watching from his seat in the group, blurted, "My father had a tic. He's acting just like my father."

Representatives do not need to go through a role development process to discover the person they are portraying because they are able to let the role develop not from a role play, but from their position in the sociometric network, where they are intuitively placed.

As Franke puts it, the positionings are part of an internal and invisible picture, "a soul picture" (2003). Once representatives are in position, they seem to fall into the systemic telic relationships of the family system, some recognizable, some on the edge of consciousness, some completely unknown before.

How is it that representatives pick up their roles simply by standing in certain sociometric positions? We don't know, but the process appears to work in practice from a phenomenological view. Certainly, the method has been widely challenged in Germany and elsewhere by skeptics who question the validity of this work. In 2005, a study by Peter Schloetter at Witten-Herdecke University in Germany researched and documented some fascinating conclusions about constellation placement using statues for people

(Schloetter, 2005). Using an actual client situation, up to seven statues were placed in a room, their positions set up by that client, with each statue representing a person in the client's family system. People unfamiliar with Constellation work were brought in and asked to stand in each of the seven positions. Each person in each particular position reported body sensations and feelings. Another seven people were brought in, then another. What was established was a pattern of extremely high correlation between placement and internal response for each position, no matter who entered the room to stand in those positions. The conclusion: The sociometric position where a person is placed, in relationship to others who have been placed similarly, evokes very *similar* feelings and sensations. Schloetter had originally set up his research experiment to prove that Hellinger's placements were arbitrary and the responses of representatives random, but reports showed the opposite.

### **Contrasting the Views of Moreno and Hellinger**

Moreno pioneered recognition about the importance of our relationships with each other, asserting that each person is the sum total of his or her role relationships. Thus, the psychodrama method basically promotes individual dramas that explore relationships in need of emotional repair, or role training in order to respond differently in specific situations and relationships. In psychodrama, we become the stars in our own dramas to establish this repair. In classical psychodrama, the protagonist's present dilemma is traced to the "locus" and "status nascendi" of the issue in the individual's earlier life, to maximize the effectiveness of the repair in the individual's life

According to Hellinger, more often it is not the individual in need of repair, but the system. The client comes to Constellation work not as a protagonist for the psychotherapy group but protagonist for his or her own family system. As the Constellation process evolves, and the "locus" and "status nascendi" of the difficulty are identified and confirmed, there is opportunity to shift the interrupted flow of spontaneous energy through the family system—restoring a flow of energy that Hellinger calls love. It is that love which creates life, as parents naturally love the children emanating from their union.

Systemic Family Constellation work reveals that current life difficulties are related to the actions and fates of earlier generations. Hellinger estimates that 70 percent of our issues stem from our ancestral past (1998) and that our energetic ties with previous generations continue to affect us and our children, long after we think they are forgotten. There is actually a natural flow of love from one generation to another until some misfortune, tragedy, or unreciprocated love interrupts the flow.

According to Hellinger's experiential discoveries, we unconsciously carry the emotional burdens of our ancestors due to an unconscious family loyalty, a need to help those who have gone before us. The familial love that naturally would pass to us becomes entangled in their misfortunes, and we are not completely free to live out our lives, without first trying to resolve our ancestor's difficulties. Constellation work makes visible these patterns so we can see what happened, respectfully acknowledging it without judgment.

Once seen and acknowledged, the family's soul can experience a natural movement toward healing. This reconciliation restores lost dignity to each family member, and a person's own obligations, guilt, loneliness and blame dissolve when the ancestors are honored for their actions and misfortunes. Integrity and strength are restored, so love can once again flow through the generations. A new visual image of one's family is created to carry in the heart and mind which enables a person to relate to members of his or her family in a different way.

### **What Principles is the Work Based On?**

After decades of observation and experience with thousands of people by Hellinger and his followers, three basic truths now known as "Orders of Love" have emerged (1998). When the orders are violated, it signals that the family needs love restored. When Constellations are set up, there repeatedly emerges spontaneous movement within the sociometric configuration toward a reestablishment of these "orders." The "family soul" has an internal need to reinstall order within its system

- **Each person has a right to belong to his or her family.** Everyone needs to belong to his or her family; if anyone is rejected or excluded, difficulties most certainly will arise in the family in future generations. The same principle appears with traumatic and premature deaths. Those lost to the family need to be grieved and taken into the hearts of the living. The family soul is only at peace when all members are sufficiently recognized by the family.
- **There must be a balance between giving and taking.** When someone takes advantage of others unjustly, an imbalance is created that can show up in following generations. Descendants of the Nazis have been burdened with the injustices of World War II, as are the descendants of their Jewish and other victims. Both carry the guilt and the trauma that still interferes with the natural flow of love to subsequent generations. Similarly, being distracted from one's love relationship with an affair, or even a longing for someone lost, will have ramifications for future generations. If not addressed, generations of obligation, guilt, and inability to become intimate can follow. Restoring the balance between giving and taking between the unbalanced parties will lead to those in the present and the future being able to love more freely, give more generously, and receive with gratitude.
- **The order in a family needs to be respected.** Something has gone wrong when children end up feeling they must take care of their parents, and parents look to their children to meet their needs. Parents naturally want to meet their children's needs out of love for them. Looking up in respect and appreciation for what has been given to one in love by one's elders is just as important. Likewise, birth order is important and must similarly be recognized. Second marriages and blended families require clarity in the order of births and marriages. When the order is ignored, dysfunction in the family can result. When a sense of order is restored, insecurity is abated, and there are new feelings of security in knowing one's place in the family.

These “orders” are not abstract concepts. As noted earlier, representatives move about the space as their intuition guides them. It does seem that the knowing field of the space appears to energize an internal intuition, completely apart from logic.

To re-establish the orders, Constellation facilitators are especially interested in knowledge about previous generations — those who have been neglected, marginalized or shunned, as well as those who have committed suicide, deaths that have not been grieved, accidents that have left people disabled, love affairs that have taken spouses away from their families, injustices that have occurred, and children who have not felt their place because of an unbalanced favoritism by a parent.

### **Illustration of Previous Trauma Affecting Client Today**

The story of Janet illustrates how a trauma in the past can affect the current generation. Janet was nearly 40, and she never had been able to sustain an intimate relationship that led to marriage. She still yearned to find a man to marry and have a child, and presented herself for psychotherapy.

Initially Ron worked with Janet in individual sessions, trying many approaches at a psychodynamic level, including psychodramatic role play. Although the work led to some important insights and recognitions, as well as some cathartic releasing of pain and tears, these approaches did not bring about the shift that Janet needed.

Ron then moved her into Constellation work. During a conversation to discern who from her family system might be relevant to her issue, she mentioned that a great aunt had committed suicide after her husband left her, following the birth of their child.

This story had had a great emotional impact on Janet during her childhood years, even though she had never known the great aunt and the situation had been barely brought up by her parents. Ron decided to have Janet set up a Constellation of herself in relation to a few members of her immediate family, her great aunt, and the husband who had left her great aunt — and the child.

She placed her own representative across from her great aunt, facing her. After the representatives felt into their positions, the child of the great aunt stepped closer to her mother and tugged on her skirt. The representative for Janet smiled at her great aunt falteringly.

Then the husband turned away from his wife, walking a few steps. When asked by the facilitator how he felt, he said he felt disgust and sick to his stomach. The representative for the great aunt reported a sense of unbearable shame. The representative for Janet's eyes teared up, and streamed down her face.

On a hunch, the facilitator chose a man from the group and placed him in front of the aunt, without identifying his identity to either the man or the group. Almost immediately,

she covered her face with her hands and fell to the ground. When the man was asked how he felt, he said, “Guilty.”

Then Ron asked the question out loud: whether the family story Janet had been told – that of the aunt’s husband having left after fathering her child – was accurate. It seemed likely, with the warmth that shown between the great aunt’s representative and her child, that it would not be enough to cause her to commit suicide because her husband walked away. She would want to stay alive out of love for her child. It became more likely she had been impregnated by someone else, possibly in an incestuous situation – causing her husband to abandon her, and then for her to feel unworthy to mother and raise this child. This possibility, once voiced, resonated inside with all the representatives on stage. Janet, watching from the sidelines, immediately sighed and looked compassionately sorrowful toward her great aunt.

Janet was asked to replace her representative, coming on stage to say “healing sentences” with the great aunt. The facilitator always has the choice of putting the client in the Constellation after the issue has been sufficiently diagnosed.

Ron as facilitator (to great aunt): Try telling your niece, “I carry my own guilt. And I take responsibility for the choice I made. It is mine alone to carry.”

Great aunt: I carry my own guilt. I take responsibility for my choice. It is mine alone to carry.

Ron (to Janet): Tell your great aunt, “I honor your suffering and will always hold you in great honor and respect.”

Janet (tears running down her face): I honor your suffering and will always hold you in great honor and respect.

Ron (to the great aunt): Tell her, “Thank you for your love.”

Great aunt: “Thank you for your love.”

Client is now sobbing, with little control.

Ron (to the great aunt): Tell her again, “I made my choices and accept the consequences. They are mine to bear, not yours.”

Great aunt: “I made my choices and accept the consequences. They are mine to bear, not yours to carry.”

Janet (nods, rushes in to the arms of the great aunt, still crying): Thank you.

Ron: Tell your great niece, “I want your life to go on well. I will bless you when you take a man and live your own life.”

Great aunt: I want your life to go on well. I will bless you when you take a man and live your own life.

Janet (separates and searches the great aunt's eyes): Thank you.

Ron (to Janet): Tell your great aunt, "When I take a man, I will do so *also* in your honor..."

Janet: When I take a man, I will do so also to honor you.

Great aunt smiles.

Ron (to Janet): And I will keep you in my heart always.

Janet: And I will keep you in my heart always. (She takes the hands of the representative of her aunt, smiling still.)

Janet then re-embraced the representative of her great aunt. It took another two minutes for her to leave, staring at her great aunt.

The supposed "real" story unfolded on stage by resonance. Suffice it to say that by being placed in the sociometric matrix of the collective family unconscious, one accesses not only the role and the network but also a kind of family memory, resonating through the Constellation, still seeking resolution. It wasn't necessary to confirm the facts that came out of the Constellation, and the client had no interest in researching it – even if she could have found out. But now it was no longer important to her. Inside her, the story resonated as true and, most importantly, it appeared to have resolved the issue she had struggled with.

Janet left the session feeling freer to marry a man, and did so the next year. This is an example of how a family member from a previous generation of a family system had been marginalized after the family had been traumatized by her suicide. Through the story of the shame and suicide of her great aunt, Janet had come to unconsciously identify with her aunt, becoming irrationally afraid of dying if she married. But the Constellation suggested the story she had been told had been incomplete: it was unlikely her great aunt could have committed suicide and left her baby, unless she felt too ashamed and unworthy to be the child's mother.

### **Adapting Constellation Work to Psychodrama**

In Ron's own work with groups, he utilizes Moreno's role reversal and what he has coined "position reversal" from Hellinger. To illustrate:

John, a psychotherapy client, complained about his wife's dissatisfaction and nagging and said his own anger and frustration had increased within the marriage. Ron directed him to place a representative for himself and a representative for his wife.

He was directed to empty himself, as best he could, of his current emotions and preconceptions and to allow himself to be surprised by where he would place the representatives.

He placed the woman representing his wife at the far end of the stage. She almost immediately looked down and away.

Then, choosing someone to represent him, he placed this person a few feet away, behind the wife's back and off to the side, facing slightly away from the wife.

Ron asked the two representatives to follow their feelings and impulses, if strong. The wife began to wring her hands, and the man slumped forward and put his head down. The client stepped back from the energy field and watched; his head and body then jolted with surprise and recognition.

Ron immediately returned him to his own position, replacing his representative, his head and shoulders duplicating the downward posture, his face contorted. Ron asked him to intensify the feeling, and he fell to his knees and sobbed.

After a while, Ron asked him to turn on his knees, and look toward his wife, who had already turned around to look at him when he fell to his knees.

Director: Who is she really?

John: My mother.

Ron chose someone else to represent his mother — he did not want to distract him from the deeply altered trance by asking him to make the choice — and placed her a bit away from and behind his wife, telling him who he was placing there.

John looked at her briefly and then rose to his feet. He ignored his mother, turning instead to his wife.

John (to wife): I have gotten you confused with my mother. I didn't mean to do that.

Wife nods.

Knowing that the next predictable psychodrama scene would require role reversal with his wife to establish her personality, Ron instead directed him stay in his own position, simply looking at his wife. He breathed a sigh of relief with a faint smile. Ron directed him to continue to breathe deeply a few more times, making sure he was "feeling into" the position. Then Ron dismissed his mother, seeing he was not about to be drawn there.

Ron asked John to step out of his position to take his wife's position on stage. Not a role reversal yet, it was simply a position reversal. Ron wanted him to stand in the sociometric position, the soul space of his wife, for the sake of taking in a deeper knowledge of her.

Ron asked him to wait, to feel into the position first, then look at himself from her position. Then Ron interviewed him.

Ron: How is it from here?

John (taking more time to feel her position): I feel frightened and unhappy. I do not know what I am doing (tears and a pause). I do not want to frighten him off — I need him. It has nothing to do with him.

Director (speaking psychodramatically now): Then, tell him.

Now the interactions and role reversals move more quickly towards resolution. Ron did not need time to establish the role of the wife for the auxiliary. Between her own feeling into the position, seeing him feel into position and the first two role reversals, she was able to create the role from a deeper place.

One of the commonly asked questions is: "How do you know if a representative is projecting his or her own personal material into a role?" Constellation facilitators have found that in practice it doesn't make much difference. Because the representative is usually chosen by the client whose issue is being worked with, it is likely that inherent in that choice is an unconscious sense that individual also has an issue connected with the current Constellation. But the power of what transpires onstage, its resonant interplay, will almost certainly use that issue in service of the Constellation's work. The only change in representation will come when the representative is not open to what emerges from within and tries to improvise a role out of his head.

This leads to a summary of five main differences between psychodrama and Constellation work.

1. Auxiliary work in psychodrama depends on a role development process, whereas Constellation work relies only on what emerges within the representatives and the systemic configuration.
2. Doubling in psychodrama is the attempt to get at the truth using an auxiliary tapping into what lies beneath what is being said, whereas Constellation Work tests what lies beneath by having representative repeat in monotone some intuited lines fed by the facilitator, to see if they resonate within not only the representative but also within the system.
3. While psychodrama is the drama beginning with the perceptual reality of the protagonist, Constellation Work is the drama that emerges from an unconscious reality, an intergenerational family matrix, a knowing field of energetic relationships.

4. Classical psychodrama goes back to the locus and status nascendi of the protagonist's issue within his or her own life, while constellation work *mostly* returns to the time to the locus and status nascendi of the client's issue in one's inter-generational history.
5. Psychodrama is a group therapy first. As such, the greatest therapeutic gains often are achieved in the sharing segment, when the protagonist is reunited with the group following self-disclosure in the action. The group members share with the protagonist the emotional investment and struggle to find a resolution for the protagonist's issue, and that is one way they feel closer to each other. To know that others accept you afterwards also bonds you with others in a group. The sharing with each other is sometimes seen as having the most lasting effect on group members, long after the stories are forgotten. In Constellation work, the therapy is done in a group, with the advantage of group energy, but its bonding is temporary, and based on the amazing experience of this work's resonant energy, everyone feeling movements of the soul leading them, uniting them in the achievement of peace. But once that peace is achieved for the client, the bonding falters, because there is not the same struggle towards resolution one share in a here-and-now situation.

### **Conclusion and Loyalty to the “Ancestor” of Psychodrama**

As we can see, there are many similarities between psychodrama and Systemic Constellation Work, particularly the group setting and the recognition of sociometric connections, as well as differences. There is much in Hellinger's work – especially the observation of the knowing field – that furthers Moreno's concept of tele into a new developmental stage.

What happens due to the telic connections found in Constellation work should not be all that surprising to those trained in psychodrama. Moreno, should he observe Constellation work, might reflect on his early enthusiasm about the power and mystery of tele. He might say that Bert Hellinger stole his idea, and Hellinger, a great synthesizer of methodologies, just may have.

A growing number of psychodramatists in the United States and around the world are experimenting with the combination of psychodrama and Constellation work in group psychotherapy and training settings. Others adapt Constellation ideas in individual sessions with good success for their clients. This integration has shown positive results, yet we know some psychodramatists may be skeptical. Others are questioning the value and future of psychodrama in their enthusiasm for Hellinger work.

Hellinger has spent much time writing about loyalty in his papers and books (1999, 2001) and states repeatedly that people are bound more than they realize by loyalty to their family members, known or unknown. Those who are indebted to psychodrama will be quick to be loyal to psychodrama, just as the child will have a natural tendency to be loyal to his or her parents. Likewise, those who have gained much from Constellation work remain loyal to Hellinger, seeing psychodrama as a relic from the past.

To bridge his own loyalty issue, Ron sees Systemic Family Constellation Work as the probable path Moreno would have taken in the further development of his action method, confirming yet another level of the mystery inherent in our connectedness, beyond categorization and measurement. We believe that psychodrama can add to its repertoire while still remaining loyal to its founder.

Likewise, Constellation work can utilize the knowledge of psychodrama to extend itself and its applications to treatment centers throughout the United States, where psychodrama has gained recognition through the years. For clients who take part in Constellation work must be ready and open to an answer that emerges in front of them; in other words, to be open to what shows up, out of the unconscious. This means that many people in treatment programs may not be ready yet for this more somber, meditative work. They may need to begin where they are, in their conscious denials or delusions. For these persons psychodrama may be the better place to begin.

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Constellations work can get to systemic issues in a streamlined manner but misses nuances of experience due to minimal verbal involvement (von Ameln & Becker-Ebel, 2020). Family constellation sessions are based on three orders of love outlined by Hellinger-(1) every member has the right to belong to the family, (2) wrongs in previous generations will be redressed in future generations, and (3) people have rank according to who entered the system first (Hellinger, Weber, & Beaumont, 1998). Psychodrama enactments generally have a clearly defined scene while constellation work takes places without concrete context (Carnabucci, 2018). The challenge and promise for psychodrama of systemic constellation work. Retrieved from [http://www.awakening.com.au/download/diploma\\_library/SYS303%20Systemic%20Constellations/SystemicConstellationWorkand\\_Psychodrama.pdf](http://www.awakening.com.au/download/diploma_library/SYS303%20Systemic%20Constellations/SystemicConstellationWorkand_Psychodrama.pdf).  
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Mayer, C.-H. (2018). See more of Integrating Psychodrama & Systemic Constellation Work on Facebook. Log In. or. Create New Account. See more of Integrating Psychodrama & Systemic Constellation Work on Facebook. Log In. Forgot account? This Friday (and every fourth Friday through 2021): "Ancestor Stories: An Experience of Family Constellations," an experiential training using the methods of psychodrama, sociometry and Family Constellations. CE and psychodrama credits; see this link for info: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/134698923105>. A personal look at the Family Constellations of Bert Hellinger. [eventbrite.com](https://www.eventbrite.com). Ancestor Stories: An Experience in Family Constellations. A personal look at the Family Constellations of Bert Hellinger.