



# Organisational Constellations

A tool for groups to help build empathy, provide context and foster mutual understanding across organisations, groups and other complex systems.

## You will need

A group of people ideally 6-25. You need enough people and not too many. A space large enough for everyone to stand up and move around in. Someone to facilitate the constellation. At least 45 minutes

## How it works

### 1. Set it up

Clear an open space.

Ask everyone to gather in a circle around the open space.

Explain the principles of the constellation:

- It's a self generating, emergent map of a group or system
- Everyone will play a role
- We can't predict how the constellation will emerge
- We'll work with what emerges
- We'll pay attention to what we are seeing, hearing and feeling
- We'll be generous and curious
- We'll seek to understand not judge
- What we uncover is not 'true', but it might reveal a useful model

### 2. Start it

- Ask the group to nominate a person / role they want to build the constellation around (the core)
- Invite a volunteer or assign a participant to represent the core
- Invite them to stand in the centre of the clear space
- Ask them to explain who they are, what they do, and what they imagine is important to the person they represent. What are they worried about?
- Who do they work with?

### 3. Build it

Invite people from the circle to step into the space and represent the people who work with the core.

- Who are they, what do they do, what concerns them?

- What is the nature of the relationship between them?
- What are they experiencing?
- Who do they work with?
- Repeat and build the constellation until everyone is involved.

#### 4. Explore it

Pause from time to time and consider:

- What is the shape of the constellation?
- Where are people standing?  
Are they standing close to those they work with?
- What physical patterns are evident, do they relate to reality?
- How are people playing the roles feeling?
- What are they saying, how are they saying it?
- What questions have yet to be asked/answered?
- What are you curious about?
- Who is missing?
- What does this tell us?
- How might this help us?

Resume the exercise

#### 5. Bring it to a close

The constellation will emerge. The group will draw understanding from it in unpredictable ways.

Often you will reach a natural conclusion as everyone is drawn in, or as the constellation leads you to a terminating point.

Encourage the group to reflect on what they experienced and learned.

If there is time invite them to run the exercise again, where would they like to start this time?