

## FAMILY CONSTELLATIONS

### QUESTIONS TO ASK BEFORE A WORKSHOP

FACTS provide the most significant information in family constellation work, unlike traditional therapy, which makes interpretations based on descriptions of character, personality and interpersonal dynamics.

What happened in the lives of the members of your present family or the past few generations of your family of origin, that was traumatic, unusual, or which significantly altered the course of events thereafter?

**Regarding your Family of Origin:** These questions relate to your

- siblings,
- your parents and
- their siblings (all uncles and aunts),
- the grandparents and - in cases where they met a dramatic fate - they also relate to the great-grandparents (e.g. death during childbirth), as well as any former partners of your parents and grandparents.

**Remember:** *What may or may not be acceptable in society and its norms today, may have been different in the past. (Zeitgeist)*  
*i.e. Divorce was not an option in the Catholic faith. If that happened it had severe consequences.*

**Regarding your Present Family:** These questions relate to your

- spouse/partner,
- your children and also to
- any former partners and
- any children from a former marriage or relationship.

**Did anyone in your family:**

#### Childbirth

- Die during childbirth?
- Suffer illness or disability resulting from having given birth to a child (your mother, grandmother, great-grand-mother, or a former partner of your father or grandfather)?
- Find her life in danger during childbirth (your mother or grandmother)?
- Have a difficult birth (including Caesarean)?
- **Have a stillborn child?**
- **Have an abortion or a miscarriage?**  
NOTE: Abortions and in some cases miscarriages affect the couple's or parents' relationship, and may have an impact on the other children.
  - Children should not inquire about an abortion or miscarriage, honouring it as part of the privacy of the parent's relationship.
  - A stillborn child, however, is considered a sibling and children must know about it.

#### Childhood

**Did you or anyone in your family:**

- Have an illegitimate child?
- Have a child who was abandoned or given up for adoption?
- Experience separation from the mother at a young age (e.g. a hospital stay)?
- Experience a traumatic event during childhood?

#### Other

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- Commit suicide?
- Attempt suicide?
- Serve or die in military service?
- Commit a crime, including a war crime?  
*NOTE: Children should not inquire about war crimes, but it may be known as part of the family lore.*
- Survive or perish in the Holocaust or a genocide taking place at another time?

### **Did you or anyone in your family:**

- Have a life-threatening event/accident at any age?
- Have a former spouse, fiancé, partner or lover (the parents or grandparents)?  
*NOTE: Children should inquire about former partners only if they were a spouse or fiancé.*  
*Other kinds of relationships may be known about from family "stories" but are a part of the parents' privacy. However, children must know about children from any former relationship.*
- Have a serious illness?
- Have a long-lasting illness?
- Have a physical or mental disability?
- Become a missing person?
- Join the clergy or enter a monastery?
- Actively involved with spiritual matters? (Overly religious, New Age or the like)
- Encounter prejudice - being slandered, ignored, disrespected, not honoured, treated with contempt or as an outcast (e.g., homosexuals or lesbians, disabled persons, alcoholics, criminals, street person)?
- Complain of being taken advantage of (e.g. with regard to an inheritance)?
- Emigrate to another country?
- Lose your or their fortune?
- Not marry and/or get belittled due to not marrying?
- Live an unusual life?