

Step 1: Warm 'em Up

Use “warm up” constellations to soften the edge, invite people in, and teach the mechanics. Any non-threatening topic will do. For example, “My happiest times are spent in nature.” It’s important for you to stay in *The Facilitator Stance* and to affirm that “anywhere you stand is OK.” They are watching you to learn whether it is safe and what is allowed.

Process for Debriefing a Constellation

Hold the debrief process lovingly, but firmly. Say the following out loud and reaffirm as needed.

- Not everyone has to speak. Only about 20 – 30% of you will speak with your voices. Everyone is already speaking with their feet – based on where they are standing. <Keep this an open invitation>
- If you choose to speak, do so from your first-person experience. Not from your opinion or intellect, but from the experience that has you standing where you are standing. <It is often useful to model this>
- As people speak, we don't want any crosstalk. In fact, we don't even want to hear you agree or disagree. This is not a conversation; this is learning what's already here. So, just *hear* each person and know that what they are saying is true for them. <As people speak, make sure you don't make comments or noises that agree or disagree. Remain radically neutral. Quietly saying, “Thank you” is enough.>
- We're going to start in the center and work our way out to the outermost orbit. <Make sure you hear from all parts of the constellation; hold the form of staring in the middle and going to the next orbit, then the next...>
- <When the debrief winds down, break the constellation form and move to Step 3.>

Informal Constellations is an ORSC tool (Organization & Relationship Systems Coaching) developed by CRR Global Inc. co-founders Marita Fridjhon and Faith Fuller.

Ruminate on this:
What might become available if team members could quickly get clear information about what is **really** going on without talking over another or pausing awkwardly wondering when they should speak?

Step 2: Facilitate Informal Constellations around a Key Topic

This is where the magic happens. You will facilitate a small set of constellations for the main topic you are asking them to explore. This step requires significant prep – see the back for a set of prep questions. You can choose which constellations to debrief, which means to hear from some people in the constellation.

←←← See the debriefing guide.

Step 3: Take it to Analysis/Action

Break the constellation form! Have people move to a different room or at least a completely different configuration in the same room. This preserves the sanctity of informal constellations and ensures people will continue to trust the space. Have people reflect on the intelligence they just gained from the constellations. Some options:

- What new information/perspective I now have.
- How I now make sense of our situation.
- What I will do given what I learned.

Silent sticky writing and/or talking in pairs or triads is recommended to allow integration time and each person getting heard. This is not a conversation about why they stood where they did. This is about what each person learned about the system (team or group).

Step 4: Seal the Deal

Hear from everyone who wants to speak before moving to open conversation (if open conversation is still needed). Quite often, people hearing others' chosen actions can be enough. Invite, don't compel.

The Prep for Step 2 is HUGE

What's your situation? (short, like a headline)

What's your *intention*?

What do you hope happens as a result of using informal constellations?

What's your first thought about a statement? (Sometimes have to first express it as a question and then hone in on a strong, un-opinionated statement later). Give this a couple tries.

Test drive your statement. Now, what's a better statement?

Keep test driving and refining until you get a clear statement people can easily assess and one that allows them to be truthful.

Rinse and repeat for each constellation statement

Crafting constellation statements can be tricky

They need to state a perspective so it's easy for people to evaluate where they "stand" and they need to be neutral so that people are willing to be truthful. Further, your intention matters. If you want to persuade them to your path or idea, this is not the tool to use.

Where you "come from" matters greatly.

Stay in The Facilitator Stance

- Open to what happens
- Radical neutrality
- Actively manage your triggers and biases
- Hold the process firmly and clearly

WARNING: Do not facilitate informal constellations if you cannot let go of your position or your hope for a specific outcome.

ENCOURAGEMENT: Do facilitate informal constellations if you believe that the group knowing about their inherent diversity will help them move forward.