


## EXPANSION, APPLICABILITY, AND EFFECTS OF SYSTEMIC AND FAMILY CONSTELLATION IN BRAZIL

 <https://doi.org/10.56238/arev6n4-320>

Date of submission: 19/11/2024

Date of publication: 19/12/2024

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### ABSTRACT

Systemic and Family Constellation, developed by the German therapist Bert Hellinger in the late 1970s, is a brief and innovative therapeutic approach. It recreates scenes through representation, bringing to consciousness emotions and feelings that cause relationship conflicts. This process reveals hidden dynamics, invisible loyalties, and repetitive patterns within systems, enabling their organization and resignation. The approach, which encompasses the foundations of many therapeutic techniques, responds quickly and efficiently. Despite little scientific evidence, it has gained many followers and expanded globally due to its adaptability and effectiveness. Over the years, its foundations have evolved and been applied beyond family relationships, reaching other legal, business, educational, and health relationships. This global expansion of the method is a testimony to its reliability. This article addresses Systemic and Family Constellations, their worldwide expansion, and their applicability and effects in various areas. The methodology applied was a bibliographic review combined with the application of a questionnaire on their applicability and effects in multiple conflicts and empirical research on their effectiveness, risks, and benefits for resolving disputes and challenges. In conclusion, the method has broad applicability and achieves rapid effects compared to other techniques or strategies, notably in the family context where it is most used. The method faces opposition because it is considered by many to be a pseudoscience with no proven scientific efficacy yet. Even so, it is widely disseminated and used by therapists, consultants, and coaches in various areas. Like any therapeutic approach, achieving results requires adequate preparation and training of facilitators, ethics, responsibility, and commitment.

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**Keywords:** Systemic Constellation. Family Constellation. Expansion. Applicability. Effects.

## INTRODUCTION

Systemic and Family Constellations, developed by German therapist Bert Hellinger in the late 1970s, emerged as an innovative therapeutic approach to understanding and resolving relational dynamics that affect individual and collective life. Based on the idea that individuals are interconnected by a system of family and social bonds, this methodology not only explores interpersonal relationships but also seeks to identify the underlying patterns that influence behaviors and decisions. Since its inception, Systemic and Family Constellations have expanded beyond the personal and family therapeutic context, finding applicability in other relationships such as legal, business, education, Health, and others.

At a personal level, the Systemic and Family Constellation approach is a catalyst for personal growth. It fosters an expanded consciousness, enabling individuals to find their place in relationships. This journey of self-discovery leads to increased self-knowledge, self-responsibility, empowerment, and autonomy, freeing individuals from the influence of repetitive relationship patterns.

The Constellation approach is pivotal in organizing the System within the family context. It fosters a deeper understanding of Hierarchy, belonging, and balance in exchanges. This understanding paves the way for improved communication and empathy among family members, promoting autonomy, clarity, respect, and freedom in family relationships.

In legal relationships, this approach contributes to the pacification of conflicts as each party assumes responsibility and puts themselves in the other's shoes, understanding their position; this allows the conflict to be resolved in a friendly and conscious manner without a third party imposing a decision.

In the business environment, the principles of constellations have been used to resolve conflicts, improve communication, and promote cohesion between teams, providing valuable insights into organizational dynamics. This approach can significantly increase team effectiveness and job satisfaction, highlighting its relevance in contemporary management. It helps choose products, analyze and understand the market, and respect customers and competitors.

Systemic and Family Constellations promote empathy, respect, self-confidence, self-knowledge, and educational autonomy. They facilitate understanding and improve relationships between teachers and students, education professionals, schools, and

families, thus favoring all academic performance and personal and professional development.

In Health, the Systemic and Family Constellation approach promotes respect, acceptance, and understanding of symptoms or illnesses, which enables a better response to treatment, provides strength and courage for the patient to face adversity, and, often, as in the case of psychosomatic illnesses, enables the disappearance of symptoms.

This article explores Systemic and Family Constellations, their evolution and expansion worldwide, their applicability in various areas, and the effects observed in different contexts. By addressing these issues, we seek to contribute to a deeper understanding of this approach's potential and practical implications in promoting healthier and more promising relationships and environments.

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Extensive bibliographical research was carried out to understand the foundations of Systemic and Family Constellations, their expansion throughout the world, their evolution as a therapeutic approach, their applicability in different areas, and the effects achieved. The sources consulted included:

- Works by Bert Hellinger and other authors: Fundamental texts that describe the principles and practices of Systemic and Family Constellations.
- Academic Articles: Peer-reviewed studies that address the effectiveness, evolution, application, and effects of the approach.
- Professional Reports: Research with professionals of Systemic and Family Constellations who work in different areas and their reports on the approach, its evolution, its application, its effectiveness, and its effects in other contexts.

### **EMPIRICAL RESEARCH**

A questionnaire was developed and applied to collect data on the Systemic and Family Constellation approach, its applicability, evolution, development, effectiveness, and effects. The questionnaire was distributed to Facilitators of the Approach with diverse professional backgrounds, including therapists, psychologists, administrators, lawyers, and others. Data collection included:

- Submission of the Questionnaire: The questionnaire was distributed to a diverse sample of professionals using an online platform (WhatsApp, E-mail, Google Forms).
- Data Analysis: Quantitative and qualitative evaluation of the responses to identify patterns and trends, effectiveness, application, expansion, and effects of Systemic and Family Constellation in diverse contexts.

## STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

In the empirical research, the questionnaire with 19 (nineteen) questions about Systemic and Family Constellation, the training of its facilitators, its profile, its applicability, effects, and effectiveness was sent to 650 (six hundred and fifty) professionals from different professional backgrounds who use the approach and its principles including therapists, psychologists, lawyers, administrators, and others.

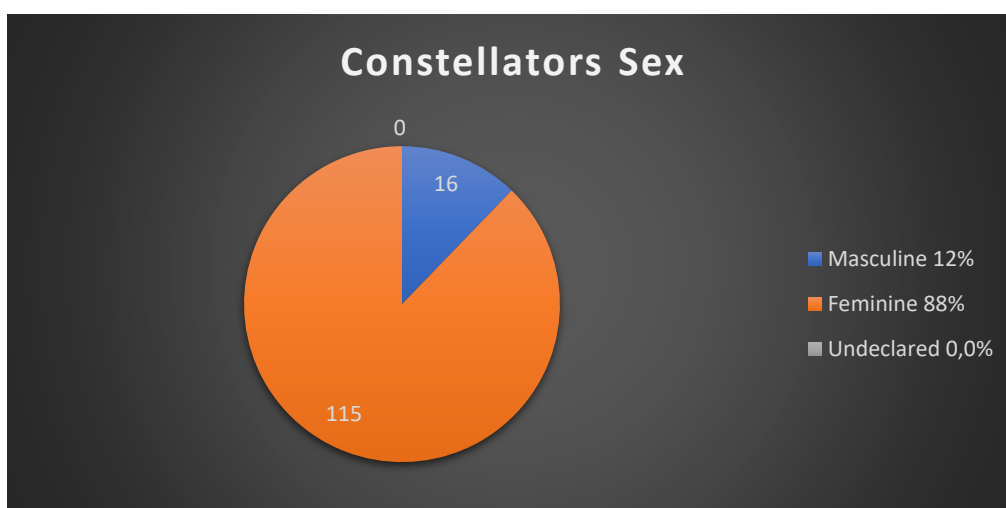
131 (one hundred and thirty-one) questionnaires were answered, corresponding to a response rate of 20.15% (twenty. fifteen percent).

## RESULTS

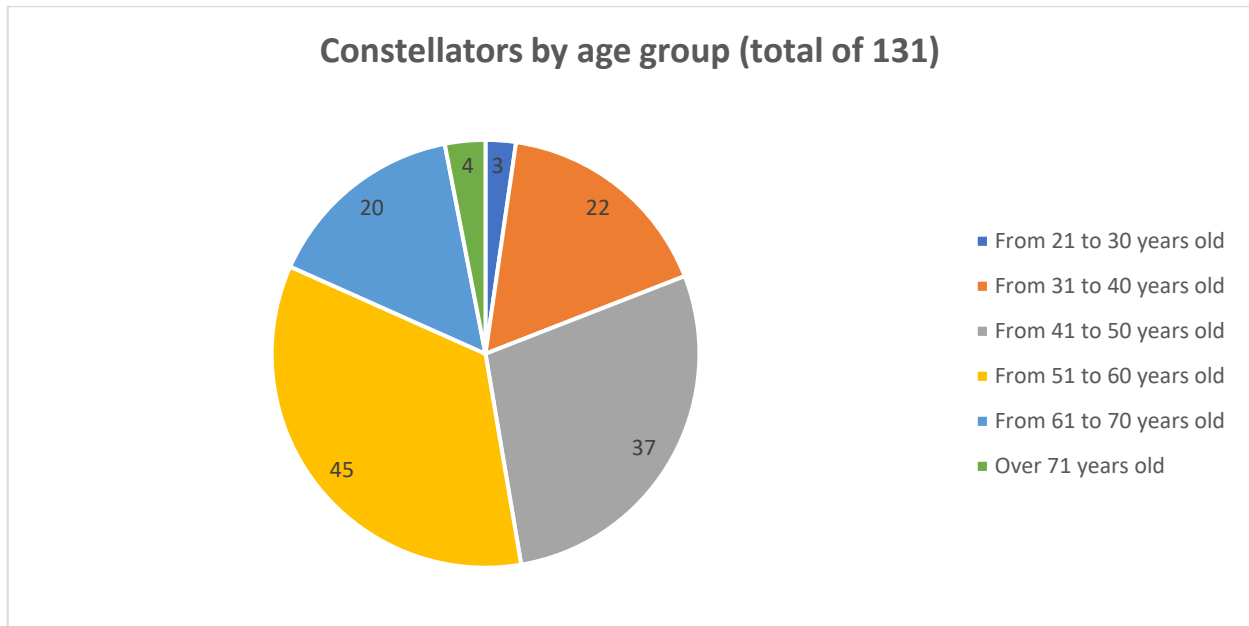
### QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS

Considering the application of the questionnaire to 650 Facilitators of Systemic and Family Constellations, we obtained a rate of 20.15% of respondents. In a quantitative analysis, we found the following results:

#### constellators sex

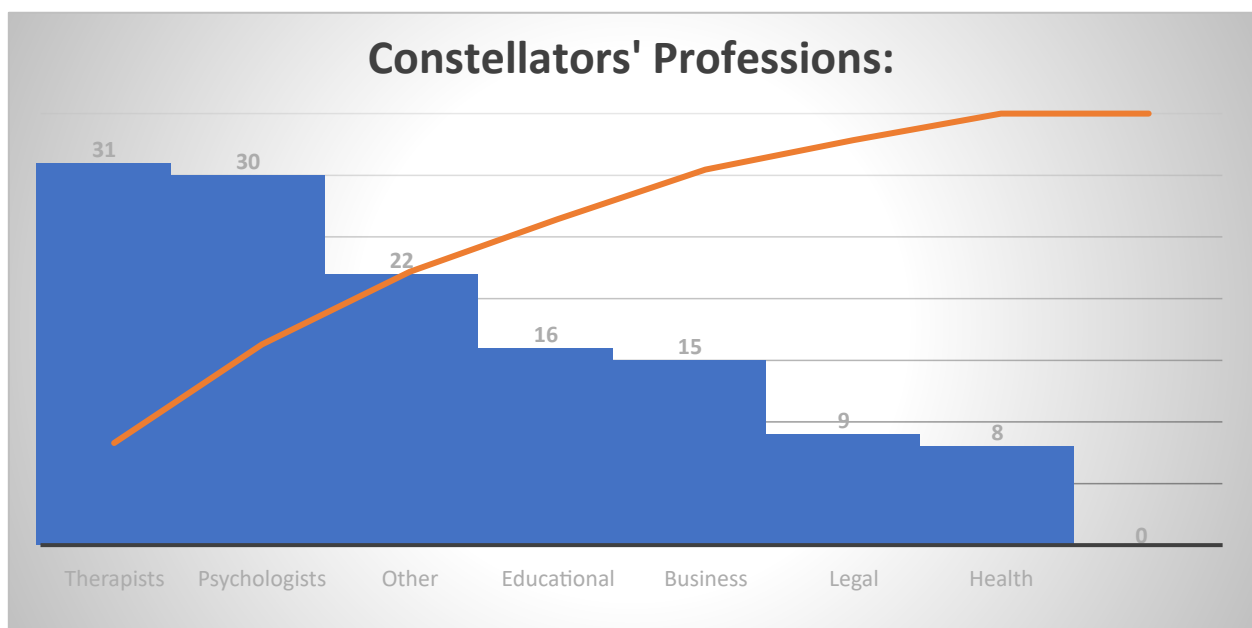


### age range of the constellators

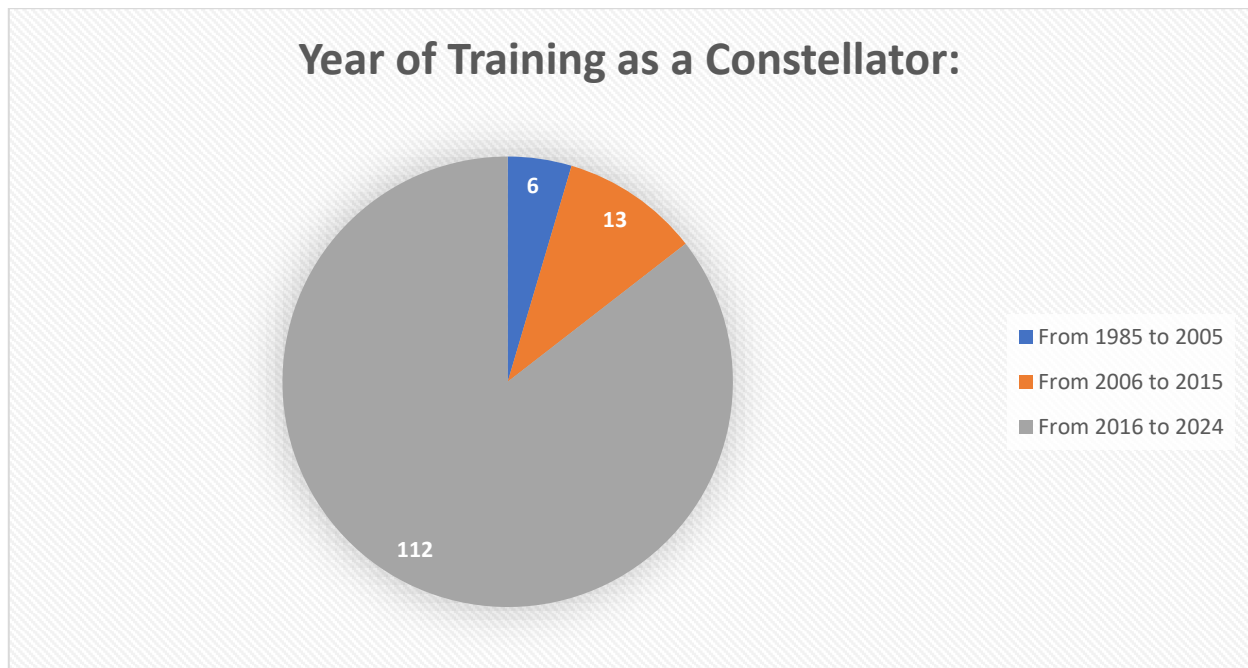


### constellators' professions

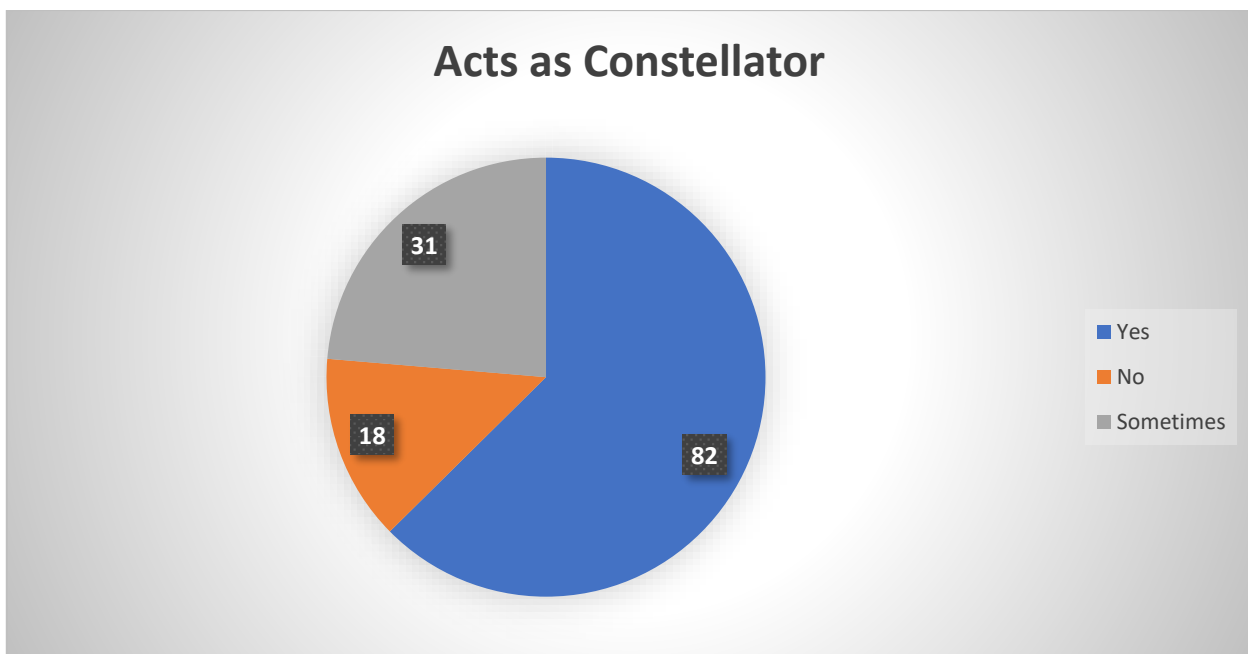
Of the 131 respondents, the most significant number of Constellators responded were therapists (31) and psychologists (30). There were also fewer Constellators working in the following areas: education (16), business (15), law (09), Health (08) and others (22).



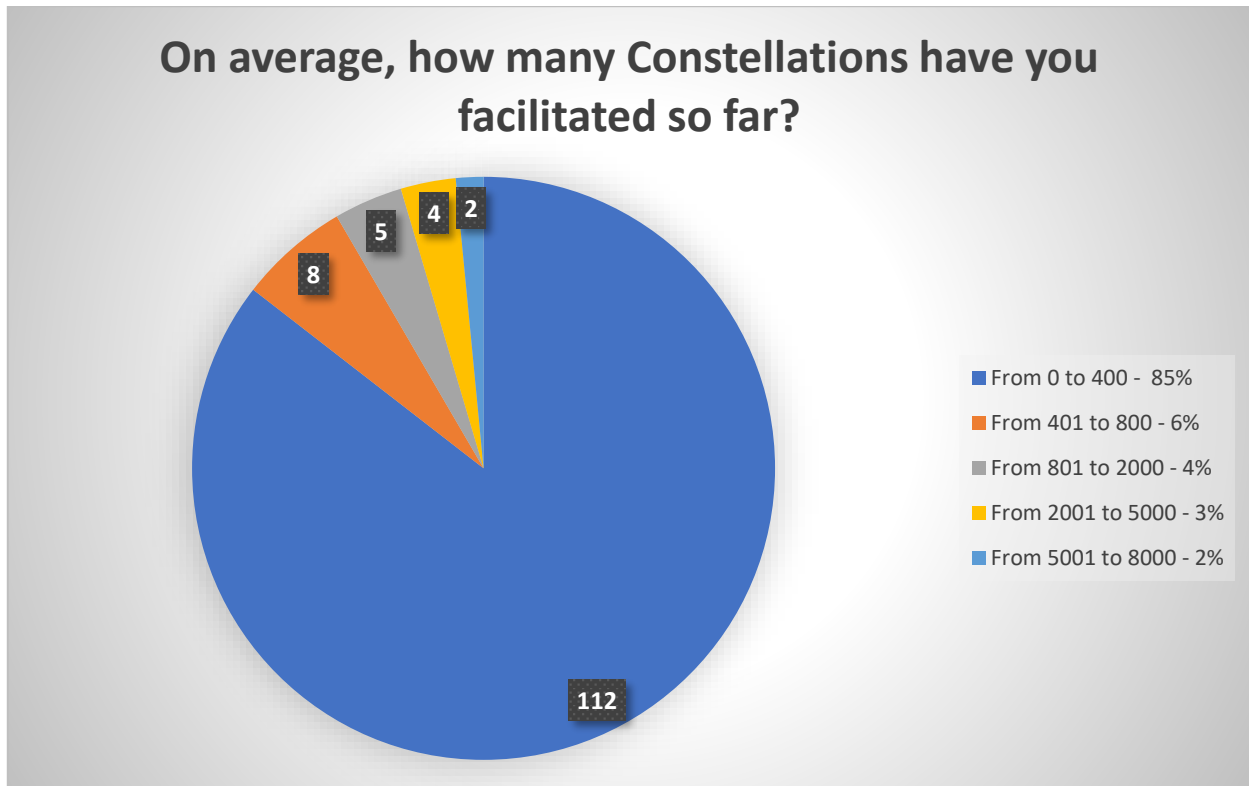
### constellator's training period



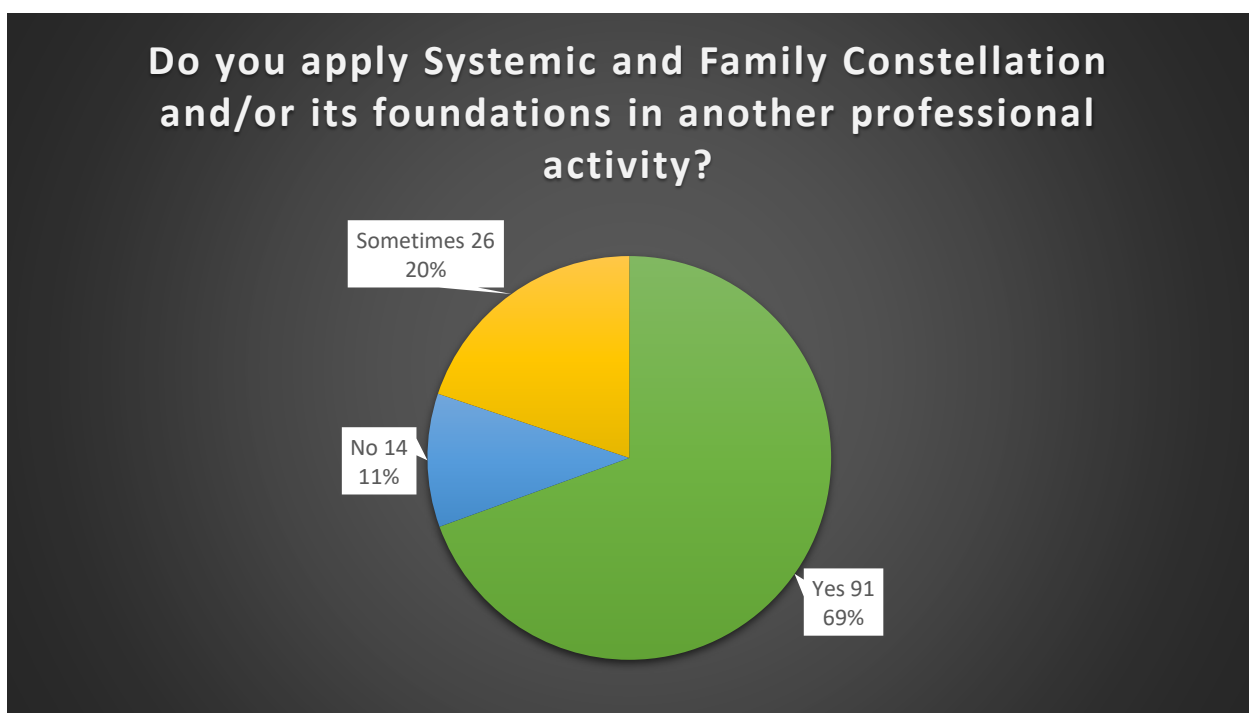
### do you work as a constellator?



on average, how many constellations have you facilitated so far?

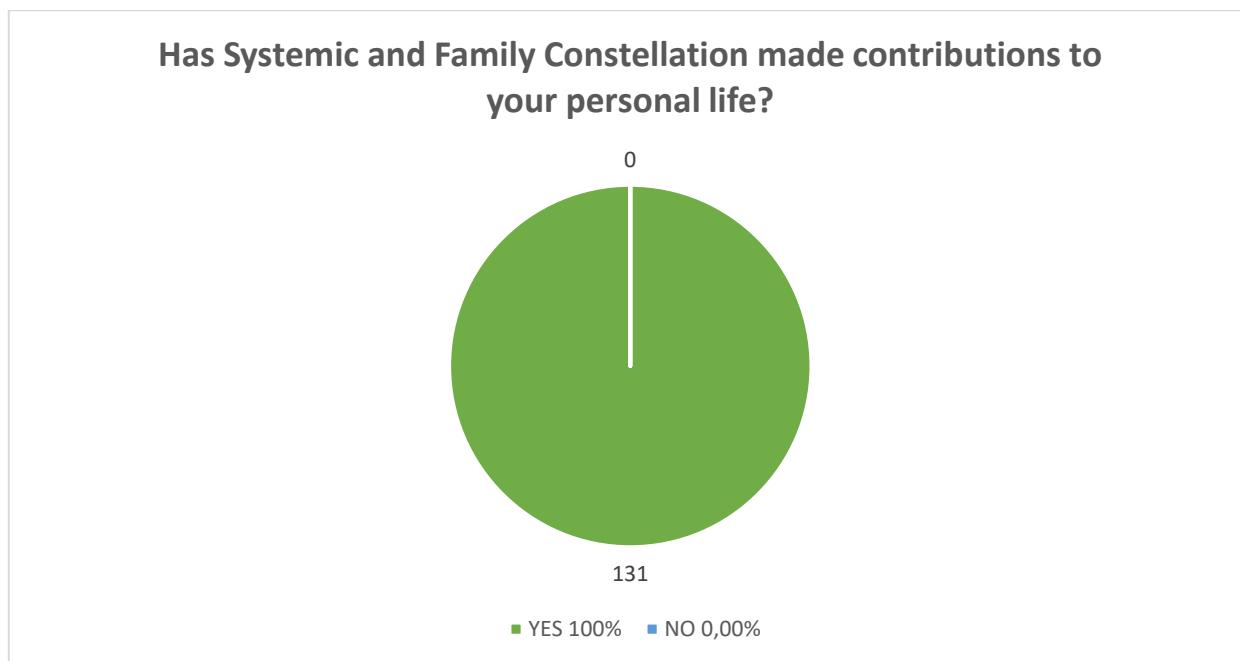


do you apply systemic and family constellations and/or their foundations in another professional activity?

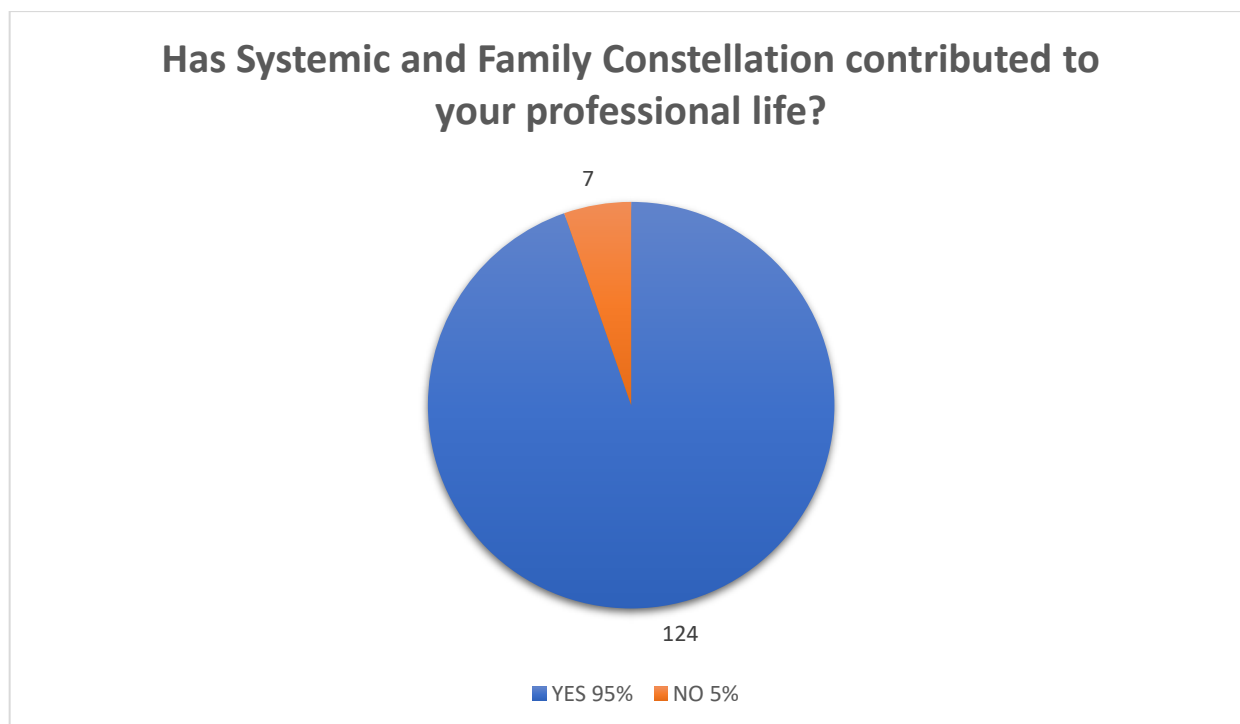




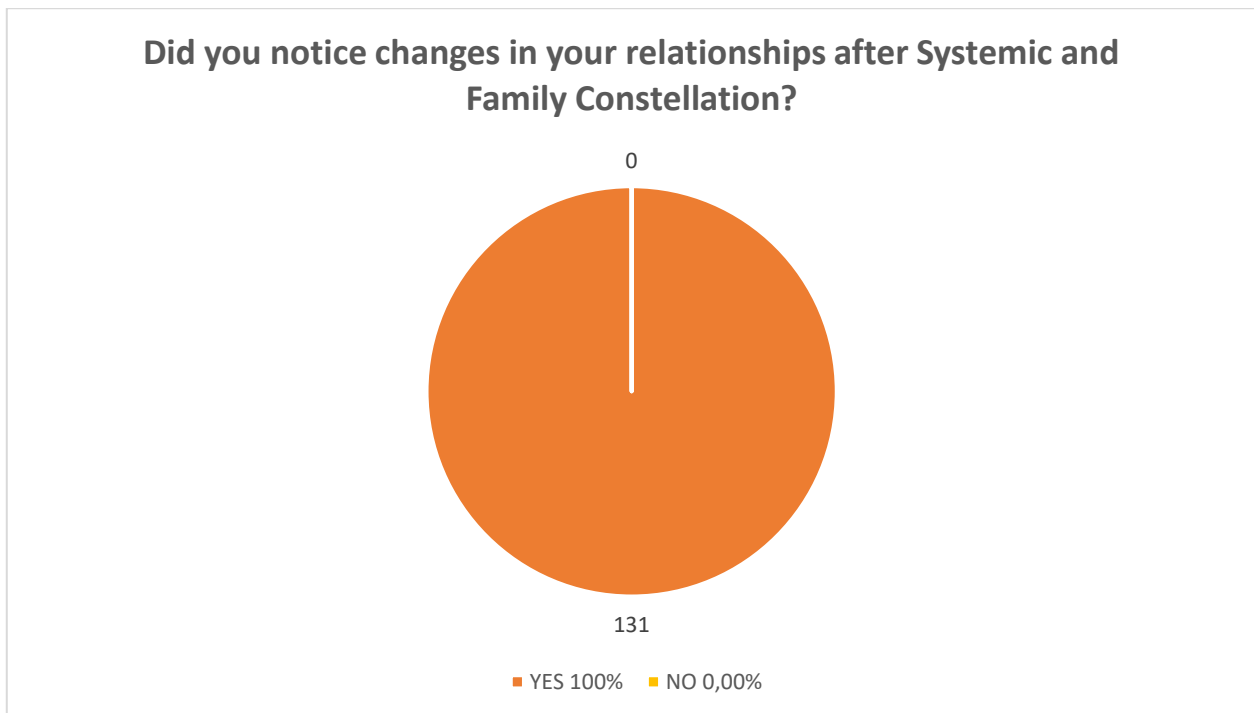
**have systemic and family constellations contributed to your personal life?**



**have systemic and family constellations contributed to your professional life?**



## did you notice relationship changes after systemic and family constellation?



### in summary

Based on the responses obtained in a quantitative analysis, we observed that most Systemic and Family Constellation Facilitators are women between 40 and 60 years of age, mostly therapists and psychologists who graduated in 2016. They have performed an average of up to 400 consultations and applied the technique to other professional activities. The majority benefited from improvements in their professional relationships, and all of them experienced improvements in their overall relationships with others

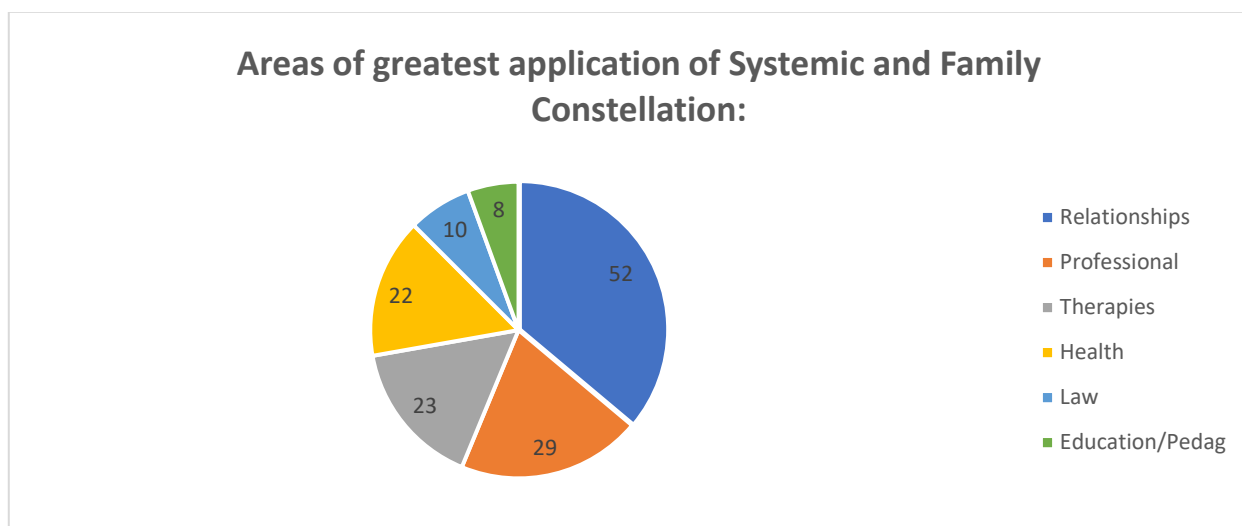
### QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS

Considering the responses to the questionnaire, in a qualitative analysis, we observed the following results:

### areas of most significant application of systemic and family constellation

Based on the Constellators' responses to the questionnaire, we can observe that Systemic and Family Constellation has greater applicability in the area of relationships (family, couples, parents, and children - 52), followed by application in the professional area (work, business, finance, communication and marketing - 29), area of therapies (self-

knowledge and personal development - 23), area of Health (symptoms and illnesses - 22), area of Law (justice and conciliation - 10) and area of education (education and pedagogy - 8). This diverse range of applications underscores the versatility of Systemic and Family Constellations, making it an intriguing and comprehensive technique.



### **percentage of positive results after systemic and family constellation**

Considering the questionnaire answers, these indicate a final average of 84% (eighty-four percent) of positive results after the Systemic and Family Constellation. This high Percentage of positive effects highlights the effectiveness of Systemic and Family Constellations, instilling confidence in its potential to bring about positive change.

### **success stories after systemic and family constellation**

Through the answers to the questionnaire, we can observe that Systemic and Family Constellation was successful in various situations, such as reconciliation between parents and children, harmonization in couple relationships, reconciliation with the past, and freedom to move forward with one's own life; relief of symptoms and cure of diseases such as insomnia, panic syndrome, depression, muscle pain and limitations, infertility or difficulty getting pregnant, alcoholism; resolution of legal proceedings involving inheritance, child custody, division of assets and divorce; career transition; decision-making; release of traumas; recovery of self-esteem; identification of life purpose and many other cases. We then realize that Systemic and Family Constellations act in several areas of life and promote a redefinition of conflicting human relationships, promoting peace and balance,

bringing clarity and lightness, and expanding awareness about oneself and relationships with others.

### **contributions to personal life**

Through the answers to the questionnaire, we identified numerous contributions to personal life, such as self-esteem, self-knowledge, self-worth, understanding and understanding of people and relationships, belonging to the System, change of attitude about conflicts and symptoms, self-responsibility, relief or cure of symptoms and illnesses, freedom to act, release of guilt and trauma, improvement in family relationships and others.

### **contributions to professional life**

Regarding professional life, Systemic and Family Constellation promotes several contributions: trust, security, knowledge, responsibility, acceptance, resilience, understanding, change of attitudes and postures, inclusion, empathy, engagement, fluidity in financial relationships, prosperity, success, new opportunities, stimulation, aggregation, tolerance, flexibility, self-control, expansion of consciousness, career transition, among others.

### **changes in relationships**

In different relationships, Systemic and Family Constellations help with autonomy, trust, freedom of communication, understanding, interaction with others, commitment, respect, nonjudgment, acceptance, dissension, love, maturity, balance, lightness, fluidity, encounter, detachment, awareness of my place, spontaneity, and courage to express myself, among other things.

### **what can be improved in the training of constellators**

The responses to the questionnaire indicate that the Training of Constellators can be improved in terms of content, with theoretical depth and more practical aspects; more interaction and knowledge among students; shorter intervals between modules; participation in immersions and workshops on various topics; supervision and training; evaluation of post-training training; care for caregivers by offering therapeutic support to students; offering specializations in different fields of activity; including and addressing

ethical issues in training; regulating courses and the profession; compiling teaching material, among others.

### **what personal characteristics can contribute to the training of constellators**

Some personal characteristics can contribute to the Training of Constellators, such as availability, sensitivity, empathy, neutral and impartial listening, intuition, maturity, lovingness, open-mindedness, engagement, focus, humility, observation, dedication, trust, commitment, responsibility, courage, lovingness, and presence.

### **in summary**

From the qualitative analysis of the responses to the questionnaire, we can observe that the most excellent application and effects of Systemic and Family Constellations are in the area of diverse relationships, followed by the professional area. An average of 84% (eighty-four percent) of positive effects is achieved in various application areas, with the technique bringing several benefits such as self-knowledge, empathy, love, respect, security, freedom, balance, lightness, and many others. There is also a need for better training of professionals with more theoretical content, training, supervision, and specialization, in addition to a call for the regulation of training courses and of the profession of Constellator. Furthermore, people with characteristics such as availability, sensitivity, impartiality, listening skills, dedication, and trust, among others, can contribute to better professional training of Constellation facilitators even though these skills are not prerequisites.

### **RESULTS OBSERVED**

The empirical results obtained through research with professionals in the field indicate its effectiveness in resolving conflicts and promoting a deeper understanding of systemic dynamics. However, the practice faces criticism related to the lack of rigorous scientific evidence and the perception that it is a pseudoscience. Even so, the technique positively impacts improving interpersonal relationships and resolving complex issues.

Regarding those applying the approach, we observed the need for more rigorous professional training, with courses that offer more theoretical and practical content, ethical principles, specializations, in-depth studies, and in-person and supervised experiences. In

short, there is a need to regulate training courses and the activity's exercise to guarantee the rights and duties of all those involved with more effective and safe results.

## **DISCUSSION**

This article addresses how Systemic and Family Constellations have expanded worldwide, how their applicability in various practice areas has evolved, and what effects this approach has achieved. Ultimately, is the Systemic and Family Constellation approach effective in what it proposes? How has it contributed to individual and collective well-being?

He was considered by many to be a pseudoscience, as it has no specific methodology or rigorous scientific proof of its effectiveness, Systemic and Family Constellations, developed by the German Bert Hellinger based on observations of repetitive behavior patterns, therapeutic experiences, studies of other theories and relational sciences, and insights from his life experience, became known worldwide for presenting rapid and transformative effects, promoting improvements in people's lives in various relational contexts.

Bert Hellinger did not create the technique. He learned about it in the United States when he participated in a seminar by Ruth Mc Clendon and Les Kadis[1]. Her contemporary therapist, Thea Schönfelder, also practiced the technique. Virginia Satir practiced Family Therapy through the representation and positioning of the members of the System. Through contact with other therapists, such as Arthur Janov (The Primal Scream), Eric Berne (Transactional Analysis), Fritz Perls (Gestalt), Freud (Psychoanalysis), Moreno (Psychodrama), and others, Bert then developed the Systemic and Family Constellation technique, bringing new concepts such as individual, collective and universal consciousness; the strength of the systemic laws of Belonging, Balance, and Hierarchy in relationships; systemic loyalty, phenomenology, transgenerationality, and others [2].

Systemic and Family Constellations are present in numerous countries, with Germany being their birthplace. They have expanded throughout Europe in countries such as Austria, Denmark, the Netherlands, Great Britain, Spain, Portugal, and Italy; throughout the Americas in countries such as Mexico, Argentina, Brazil, Venezuela, Colombia, Chile, and the United States; and to other countries and continents [3].

Since their creation, Systemic and Family Constellations have expanded beyond the initial family contexts, showing broad applicability, with positive effects reported in areas such as Health, where the technique has been used to treat psychosomatic issues and

promote a deeper understanding of patient's health conditions; Organizations, where Constellations have been applied to resolve conflicts, improve communication and increase cohesion between teams and, consequently, improve productivity; Education and Justice, where the approach has also been explored to promote conflict resolution and improve relational dynamics; Environment, fostering better interaction between people and their family, professional and social environments; In the family environment, it is widely used to resolve family conflicts, promote reconciliation and understand transgenerational patterns.

In Brazil, Systemic and Family Constellations were incorporated into the Unified Health System (SUS) through Ordinance GM/MS No. 971 of May 3, 2006, issued by the Ministry of Health, and recognized as an Integrative and Complementary Practice [4].

In the Brazilian Judiciary, through Resolution CNJ No. 125/2010 of the National Council of Justice (CNJ), Systemic and Family Constellations began to be used in almost all Courts to encourage practices that adequately treat conflicts, promoting peace between opposing parties [5]. Recently, in 2023, the CNJ reassessed the issue and suggested restricting the use of Systemic and Family Constellations in cases involving domestic violence to prevent the risk of revictimization of victims due to professionals who are not adequately trained, given that the training and the profession have not yet been regulated.

Despite all the criticism and controversy, it is undeniable that Bert Hellinger's Systemic and Family Constellation has expanded throughout the world and into various contexts beyond the family, evolving in its technique through the incorporation of other theories and practices such as Feng Shui, Astrology, Meditation, and others, achieving positive effects in the vast majority of cases. It is worth noting that the original Hellinger method is the most widely used and has the most significant evidence of effects.

How can we define Systemic and Family Constellation?

Adhara Campos Vieira defines Systemic and Family Constellation as:

"a brief therapeutic technique, which works with representations and images and is focused on solutions, as a practical philosophy, based on the systemic laws or orders of love, enumerated by the German, Bert Hellinger, philosopher, pedagogue and therapist, who synthesized this approach from the knowledge experienced over the years in which he underwent the most diverse therapies and philosophies."  
(VIEIRA, 2020) [6]

Hellinger was a great observer of human relationships. Combining his life experiences, his knowledge and studies, and his various therapeutic experiences, he developed the technique of Systemic and Family Constellations, which, using

representation, the systemic laws of Belonging, Hierarchy, and Balance between Giving and Receiving, the various levels of consciousness and unconsciousness, phenomenology and Rupert Sheldrake's Theory of Morphic Fields, can identify the origin of entanglements and conflicts, enabling a reorganization of the System, the resignification of facts and traumas, promoting balance in relationships and the release of loyalties and patterns that are repeated over generations.

In the law of Balance between Giving and Receiving, those in the same Hierarchy must respect each other equally, giving and receiving.

The natural law of Belonging presupposes that all those born or integrated into a System have an equal right to belong to it, regardless of the facts and situations that may occur. The System does not allow the exclusion of its members.

Under the law of Hierarchy, the one who came before has precedence and must be respected. However, regarding systems, the current System prefers the previous System that preceded it.

Receiving proportionally strengthens the relationship. Among members of different hierarchies, those who came before can give to those who came after without expecting compensation, while those who receive are responsible for acceptance and gratitude and can pass on what they have received.

Observing these laws daily makes it possible to maintain a healthy, accessible, and prosperous relationship between everyone.

The application of Systemic and Family Constellations can happen in several ways: in individual care, using resources such as dolls and other anchors for representation; in group care, where the group participants are the representatives of the System in question; and even in self-care, using meditation and visualization techniques.

The Systemic and Family Constellation works like a "flashlight," putting light where there was only darkness and fog before. The vision of consciousness expands, and then we can glimpse solutions from ourselves, not solutions proposed by third parties. For a Systemic and Family Constellation session to be successful, it is essential that the person being constellated adopts a posture of openness to new things and change, making themselves available and non-judgmental to what is about to be revealed. By becoming aware, they must use their will to change their posture and free themselves from systemic entanglements.



In the Constellation process, the representation brings to light the awareness of painful events, what one's participation or contribution to what happened was, and looks at the solution, that is, what stance one can take to free oneself from the bonds of the past and move forward. In addition to the perception of feelings by the representatives, impactful phrases are used, and movements and repositioning are performed to help understand the issue being worked on. In the end, the client feels relieved, as they are aware of the events and allow themselves to leave behind what no longer belongs to them by freeing themselves to move forward with their strength, making their own choices, and no longer following the repetitive patterns of their ancestors.

Finally, answering the discussion: "Is the Systemic and Family Constellation approach effective in what it proposes? How has it contributed to individual and collective well-being?"

Given everything that has been researched and presented above, even though Systemic and Family Constellation does not have a standard application methodology, there is still no scientific proof of its effectiveness and effects, and the technique, the training of facilitators, and the profession need to be regulated to ensure better safety for all, what we can observe, based on people's responses to the questionnaire, is that yes, the approach is practical within what it proposes, since people who undergo the technique report at least some improvement in their personal, family or professional lives. In this way, Systemic and Family Constellations contribute to individual and collective well-being by promoting the pacification of relational conflicts, self-responsibility, self-knowledge, empathy, respect, and non-judgment.

## **CONCLUSION**

Systemic and Family Constellations represent an innovative therapeutic approach that has expanded and evolved over the years, demonstrating applicability in various contexts.

Despite criticism and the need for more rigorous scientific evidence, the technique continues to be widely used and valued by many professionals.

Research shows that Constellations offer a practical approach to conflict resolution and promote an understanding of systemic dynamics, with positive effects observed in various contexts.

There are risks arising from unqualified professionals misusing the technique, which requires legal regulation of the practice based on scientific evidence, adequate training and education for those applying the method, and consideration of ethical and moral issues for its use.

Future rigorous investigations and studies are necessary to consolidate the technique's scientific validity, expand its practical application, and provide a basis for its legal regulation.

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Note: The references are in Portuguese because the data research refers to Systemic and Family Constellation in Brazil.