



Frequently Asked Questions

An Embodied Conversation with the Internalized Colonizer

Saturday February 1, March 1, April 5, May 3, 2014 from 9am to 5pm
Eastside Baha'i Center | 16007 NE 8th St. Bellevue, WA 98008

Q: How are you defining colonialism for this workshop series?

A: The control of one nation by “transplanted” people of another nation — often a geographically distant nation that has a different culture and dominant racial or ethnic group.¹ The system or policy by which a nation seeks to extend or retain its authority over other peoples or territories. ²

Q: What does that have to do with me or my family?

A: As a colonial, colonized country, one of the greatest invisible truths in the U.S. is that our country was founded on disconnection from family. Through immigration, attempted genocide of Native Americans, and enslavement of African Americans, disconnection from family is woven into the map of America's soul. To whom and to where we belong has been deeply disrupted for generations.

Fast forward to today: in cultural practices, with land and natural resources management, in educational and religious systems, in organizations, with our young people...the consequences of disrupted belonging live on. When we don't know where we belong, we mistake agreement or shared ideas as a replacement for belonging. In this way, colonialism is a way of dominating how meaning is made.

This history profoundly affects all aspects of life. We convene this series to make visible how colonialism affects us today and access ancestral support to face the future, inviting renewed, authentic belonging for all.

Q: Is this series for white people, people of color, or both?

A: Both. Embedded in colonialism are the imprints of trauma bonds. Acknowledging and melting frozen trauma of both the colonized and colonizer are necessary. These images of colonized/colonizer are held in each one of us, and we deeply need each other to bring forth true reconciliation for all.

We are the descendants who have inherited the images of colonialism in America's soul. The task belongs to all of us.

Q: What do you mean by Internalized Colonizer?

A: The aspect of a person or subgroup of a larger group that desires or seeks to control, extend, or retain power or authority over another aspect of the self, another person, or the group where there is difference.³

Q: Is this series based on Family Constellations?

A: It's inspired by Systemic Family Constellations and more, including the work of Coming to the Table; the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada; Brown University's Steering Committee on Slavery and Justice; the RACE: Are We So Different? exhibit; the documentary, Traces of the Trade; Alan Briskin, author of the book, The Stirring of Soul in the Workplace; and others exploring family, institutional, and national histories in relationship to colonialism.

¹ colonialism. Dictionary.com. *The American Heritage® New Dictionary of Cultural Literacy, Third Edition*. Houghton Mifflin Company, 2005.

² Random House Kernerman Webster's College Dictionary, © 2010 K Dictionaries Ltd. Copyright 2005, 1997, 1991 by Random House, Inc.

³ Lisa Iversen, MSW, LICSW

Q: How will this workshop series be different from going to a conference on colonialism and race or reading books on these subjects?

A: This series offers what most other forms of learning are not designed to offer: an experiential, embodied way of accessing and honoring how these histories and themes influence us as individuals; in our families, organizations and country; and in all systems. This series creates sacred space to make visible and honor the expertise in the cells of our souls.

Q: What should I expect to get out of a day workshop?

A: Deepened capacity to access and hold the opposites and reclaim wholeness within us as individuals and as a collective

Opportunity to be with others moving forward on the path of truth and reconciliation

Place to experience ceremony and ancestral prayer as necessary resources for integrating and healing the shadows of colonialism

Embodied remembrance of belonging that expands true capacity for diversity

Renewed understanding that the extent to which we claim our creativity is the extent to which we can live fully

Recognition of this work's place as necessary ingredient to effectively impact climate change

Q: Will I have a chance to work on my personal issues?

A: Yes, in relationship to the group. This series shows us how inseparable our personal issues are from the collective.

Q: Is there anything I need to know, do, or study before taking one of these workshops?

A: No, but if you'd like to learn more in advance, the book *Ancestral Blueprints: Revealing Invisible Truths in America's Soul* by Lisa Iversen and information about Systemic Family Constellations can be accessed at <http://familyconstellationswest.com>.

Q: If I only take one of the workshops in this series will I get enough out of this series?

A: Yes. The whole of the series is reflected in each day, and each day is reflected in the the whole.

Q: How might this help me in my professional life?

A: We bring images of colonialism with us everywhere we go, including our workplaces. Our organizations and workplaces are created out of our colonial history and context. This series helps us to see these influences and explore possibilities of more sustainable, equitable ways of doing business and working.

Q: What qualifies you to conduct this workshop series?

A: Long careers of research and practice inspired and informed by personal and ancestral histories. To learn more about Lisa and Kate, visit the website <http://familyconstellationswest.com>.

Q: Are CEUs available?

A: Not for this offering. Email Lisa at famconwest@yahoo.com if your organization is interested in offering this series for CEUs in the future.

Q: Are there any scholarships or work exchanges possible?

A: There are currently no more work exchanges. There are a limited number of scholarships available, please contact Aysha at ayshahaq@mac.com.