

## Dr. Kalayjian Lectures at NYU Medical Center on Transforming Bullying and Teasing

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On February 15, Dr. Ani Kalayjian was invited to present a lecture to parents, caregivers, faculty, and other community members at NYU Langone Medical Center's Institute of Reconstructive Surgery. Parents of children with physical challenges gathered to learn about how to cope with bullying, teasing, and other violations of human rights, which are especially heinous since the children have physical deformities.

It was indeed heartbreaking to witness the variety of physical challenges facing children. Among the attendees were children with congenital illnesses, cleft lip and palate, as well as a variety of other illnesses, conditions, and restrictions. Some had challenges to communication, some had challenges to feeding themselves, but all had parents and grandparents who are eager to learn more about how to protect their children against all the teasing and negative expressions from other children and strangers whom they encounter in everyday situations such as on the street, in the subway and buses, and in supermarkets.



The parents and grandparents had gathered to share their feelings, frustrations, helplessness, and anger about the plight of their children. They asked for tools to support their children, to protect themselves, and to be able to assert themselves. Dr. Kalayjian shared the seven-step Biopsychosocial and Eco-Spiritual model, the four-step COPE assertiveness model, as well as the Four Agreements of Don Miguel Ruiz.



The presentation was interactive and presented information via PowerPoint slides. There was a lively discussion, which included sharing, crying, and laughing. After the program parents said they felt empowered; they took copies of the healing models, and they indicated they were happy to have seen Dr. Kalayjian's presentation. It's been said that it takes a village to raise a child – but it takes even more than that to care for a child with disabilities, both physical and mental.



The presentation ended with a pizza-and-salad party for the children and their caregivers. The program's director, Dr. Aileen Blitz, expressed deep gratitude to Dr. Kalayjian for her time and wonderful presentation based on research and her experience working with children from around the globe. Dr. Kalayjian shared information about the Youth Empowerment Program that ATOP Meaningfulworld sponsors in elementary and junior high schools in the tri-state area, which is being received well and expanding to other schools. For more information, kindly contact Dr. Kalayjian at [DrKalayjian@Meaningfulworld.com](mailto:DrKalayjian@Meaningfulworld.com).