



The Association for Trauma
Outreach & Prevention (ATOP)

www.meaningfulworld.com

Phone: 1 (201) 941- 2266

E-mail: drkalayjian@Meaningfulworld.com

Self-Care & Transforming Vicarious Trauma

Sylvester Benson

What is emotional intelligence? Why is it not taught in schools? What is trauma and how can we effectively manage our emotions to prevent trauma in the future? These are some of the questions that were addressed in our monthly educational workshop on 26 March 2022. Natalia Tomassini and Dr. Kalayjian co-lead the workshop to explore the history and types of traumas, strategies for trauma management, self-care, emotional intelligence, and mindfulness.

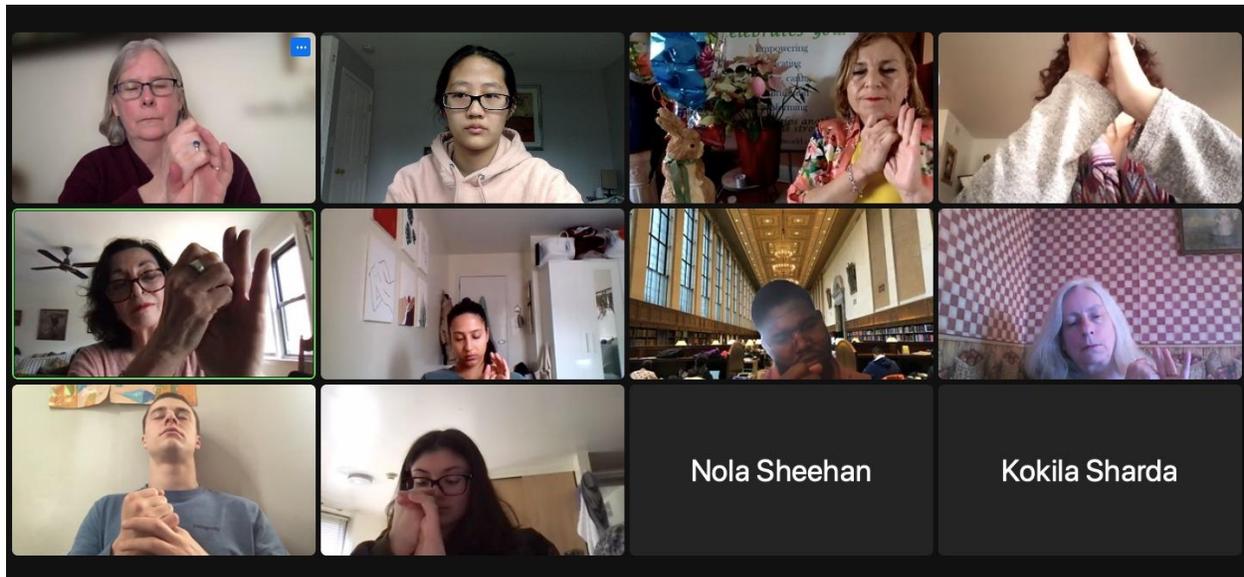
Natalia began the workshop by providing a brief history of trauma, types of traumas, DSM5 criteria for PTSD, and various trauma management strategies. Trauma begins with exposure to the stressor, and a source of stress. This can happen either by direct exposure to the trauma activating event, witnessing the event as it occurred to others, hearing about it, or by repeated exposure to objects of traumatic events. Exposure to trauma is followed by intrusion symptoms in the form of distressing memories of events, flashbacks, or marked physiological response to cues that symbolize the traumatic event. There are also marked negative mood and cognitive alterations in individuals. Following the didactic lecture, Dr. Kalayjian addressed the 5 kinds of trauma namely horizontal, generational, individual, vicarious, and collective trauma.

How do we effectively manage our emotions and practice self-care? Dr. Ani led us to explore emotional intelligence (EQ) and how it differs from intelligent quotients (IQ). Unlike IQ, EQ can be learned and practiced. In order to ground ourselves and regulate our emotions, Dr. Ani outlined the various techniques and key principles that are central to achieving emotional intelligence. These include: Seeking frank feedback, being careful and thoughtful of your language, being cognizant of your culture, finding your own voice, balancing your load, quieting the mind, sleeping mindfully, and cultivating the habit of learning.

After our main discussion, we welcomed our Visionary Speaker Linda Marsanico, PhD. She is an author and psychologist with specialized skills in reiki, vortex healing, and integrated energy healing. Dr. Marsanico led the group through meditation and a series of grounding techniques. During the vortex session, she led participants to target each of the five fingers, one after the other, to channel energy and find serenity. Dr. Marsanico also introduced her new book, *The A train to Sedona*, and encouraged the group to engage with it.



Dr. Marsanico led our group to practice vortex techniques



Participants practicing vortex techniques with Dr. Linda Marsanico

A support group session was also facilitated by Will Robbins, Meaningfulworld United Nations Intern. Participants expressed emotions such as frustration, worry, and anxiety with a significant marked decrease in these negative emotions by the end of the healing session. Some of the lessons learned included: releasing negative energy facilitates healing, one must not be defined by negative labels, and empathizing with others help decrease sadness and negative emotions.

The group watched Haiti humanitarian relief works from 2019. While watching the movie, participants reflected on generational trauma and was inspired by stories portrayed. One of such inspiring stories was about a radio host, who broke a paternal generational pattern of emotion suppression by expressing love to his 82-year-old father. To his surprise, his father told him “I love you too my son.” They embraced, and then the radio host called our team members to share the good news. Love is meant to be shared and we are glad that we continue to open more opportunities for human connection.

Nola and Deanna led soul-surfing exercises and breathwork. We focused on the systems, practiced yoga techniques, and recited positive-affirmations. It was an energetic and fulfilling experience.

On behalf of MeaningfulWorld I express deep gratitude to all attendees, our Visionary Speaker, Linda Marsanico, our facilitators, and all our supporters. Kindly do not miss

our next workshop on 30 April 2022 which will focus on Disaster Relief & Meaning-Making.

Founded in 1990, the Association for Trauma Outreach & Prevention (ATOP) Meaningfulworld, charitable organization affiliated with the United Nations Dept. of Public Information, has achieved international recognition as a leader in training humanitarian outreach professionals as well as responding to two and a half decades of global and local disasters. ATOP is committed to health, justice, peace, transformation and global education promoting state-of-the-art scientific theory on peace, forgiveness, consciousness research, internship, and the development of technical skills to train mental health professionals, teachers, psychologists, art therapists, nutritionists, alternative medicine practitioners, clergy, nurses, mediators, interfaith ministers, and lay persons committed to service of the self and humanity. Meaningfulworld Humanitarian Outreach Teams have helped rehabilitate survivors from over 48 countries and 26 states in USA, making a daily difference in people's lives and helping to transform tragedy and trauma into healing and meaning-making through post-trauma growth, resilience, emotional intelligence, mindfulness, mind-body-eco-spirit health, visionary leadership, empowerment, artful collaborations, and establishing Peace & Forgiveness Gardens to create a new and Meaningfulworld view. We work locally and globally in Africa, Asia, the Caribbean, Europe, the Middle East, The Caucuses, Europe, and South and North America.

Our Motto: When one helps another, BOTH become stronger