

Meaningful World

The Association for Trauma Outreach & Prevention (ATOP)

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Careers in Applied Psychology

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What awaits students after they graduate? For careers in psychology, what field can a student select with a B.A or advanced degree succeed in? Employment after graduation is a big issue that most students face. Prof. Takooshian at Fordham University has found a way to help students by creating a forum where those in the field of psychology can mentor prospective graduates. Joined by other successful experts, Dr. Ani Kalayjian, renowned trauma expert and President and Founder of Humanitarian Relief NGO, ATOP MeaningfulWorld, shared her vast knowledge of trauma and humanitarian work at the United Nations, locally & globally. Dr. Kalayjian presented to students at the 33rd Fordham Forum on Careers in Applied Psychology hosted *by Prof. Harold Takooshian* and Fordham *Psi Chi president, Maria Elisa Vannoni, M.A.*

With a packed room, the forum began with Director of Fordham Career Services, *Jerry Goldstein, JD*. He introduced many ways in which students could find employment. Be it through networking, new, or old contacts, or even through the alums of Fordham. He mentioned the many fields that utilize psychologists. For example, in schools, hospitals, and other industries such as real estate and business. *Dr. Kalayjian* was next invited to speak.

Before the forum started, Dr. Kalayjian led the students in a brief stretching session, as she observed the students' energy was low. Participants were inhaling and exhaling, finding

peace within a chaotic time. Stretching our arms up to the sky, imagining that we are reaching the stars, the tension slowly drained, and we were more attentive. After sitting down, the students were ready, alert, and happy to hear the speakers.

Dr. Kalayjian, who has a career spanning 30-plus years at the United Nations & globally, started her talk by asking, "How many of you know that there is a specialty in humanitarian relief work?" To our surprise, only one student was aware of this fact. However, many students were aware of the devastating earthquake in Turkey and Syria. Bringing a personal touch to the lecture, Dr. Kalayjian shared that her family in Syria, where she was born, is currently facing tremendous hardships. Money is actively being raised for relief efforts, but due to sanctions, people are suffering more, as the humanitarian aid is not reaching the people in need. Psychologists must work closely with political leaders as disaster relief could be highly charged by geopolitical environment.

Dr. Kalayjian next utilized her expertise in trauma to discuss its impacts and applicability in humanitarian work. Trauma can be seen on five levels. 1. Individual trauma, or what you experience. This can be seen in things from gender based violence to bullying in school. 2. Generational trauma, which is passed on from our ancestors, such as slavery, colonization, & Genocides. 3. Vicarious trauma, which is experienced by psychologists who work with traumatized clients. 4. Collective trauma, which is experienced by large groups of people, such as the COVID-19 pandemic that impacted everyone worldwide. And 5. Horizontal Violence. Horizontal violence is what African Americans living in the south call "Crab in the bucket." Students in the forum connected with this saying as they observed the act of crabs staking on top of each other in buckets. One crab tries to come out of the bucket, while the second drags it back down. According to Dr. Kalayjian, "When you are colonized and oppressed for generations, that trauma will spread horizontally. Whoever is next to you, be it your brother or sister, is hurt unconsciously by the envy, jealousy, and other negative emotions you may be displace internalizing the oppressor's mindset."

Being involved at the United Nations since 1989, Dr. Kalayjian shared her experiences as a psychologist, with people calling them 'psychics' whenever they arrived at events at the UN. Thankfully after decades, psychology has become a reputable field, and currently there are dozens of NGOs working in collaboration with the UN, like ATOP MeaningfulWorld, and have formed a coalition called Psychology at the UN (PCUN)!

Numerous banners of positive messages that MeaningfulWorld has nurtured around the world were displayed around the room. The students read them aloud. "Don't be a crab in the bucket. Be a true humanitarian and lift one another up!" One example a positive motto MeaningfulWorld asserts is, "When



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one helps another, BOTH become stronger". The effort put in by MeaningfulWorld has allowed the organization to volunteer bringing humanitarian relief in 50 countries and 26 states in America. The numerous banners hung around the room are translated into the local languages and delivered at volunteer missions. Volunteers grow and find meaning as well. Those who are confused and lost beforehand, after the mission they know exactly what they want to do. Joining MeaningfulWorld is not just about helping others but also about manifesting your own miracles for a healthier life.



Participants at the forum showed interest in the internship programs offered by MeaningfulWorld, as these program offer an individualized experienced tailored to a student's needs and interests. We have pre-doctoral internships, fellowships, international diplomacy, and fellowships at the UN. The APA gave a commendation to MeaningfulWorld for their internships. There are also high school, college, research, and other internships.

Lastly, we learned about the 7-step Integrative Healing Model. This model helps us to heal our minds, bodies, spirit, and mother earth. This is the only psychological model that integrates ecology, spirituality, and forgiveness. Ecology is essential in our holistic health and wellbeing; so that we could address the impacts of earthquakes, hurricanes, natural disasters, and human-made disasters like war, impacting individuals' mental health and well-being worldwide. Dr. Kalayjian demonstrated organizational outreach through the United Nations SDG's the Sustainable Development Goals to reach by 2030.

With the students engrossed in her lecture, Dr. Kalayjian concluded with a photograph and a question. The slide showed a view of a valley in Southern India. One woman saw that the valley was barren, with only rocks and dirt. Every year for 25 years before she died, she planted various flower seeds in this valley. After 25 years, the valley is flourishing with a rainbow of flowers. Her work was spread with the help of the internet, and her story lives on after her death. "Where are your seeds? Where are your flower bulbs, and where are you planting them? What is your vision? Where do you see yourself in 25 years? What kind of banner will be shown in honor of you?" She concluded with these thought-provoking questions. Our upcoming workshop will be held on 25 March. Here, we will focus on Conflict Transformation & Peace Building. To learn more about MeaningfulWorld, and the 7-Step Integrative Healing Model, visit our website www.meaningfulworld.com and attend our programs!

