

Biopsychosocial & Eco-Spiritual Model

For disputes & conflict transformation

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The Meaningfulworld Humanitarian Outreach Program developed by Dr. Ani Kalayjian utilizes the seven-step Biopsychosocial & Eco-Spiritual Model, through which various aspects of dispute, conflict, or disagreement are assessed, identified, explored, processed, worked through, and reintegrated with the lessons learned from the process. The seven-step model is at the core of all workshops (Kalayjian, 2002).

This innovative and integrative model incorporates various theories, including: psychodynamic, interpersonal (Sullivan, 1953); existential and humanistic (Frankl, 1962); Electromagnetic Field Balancing (EMF, Dubro & Lapierre, 2002); forgiveness and reconciliation (Kalayjian & Paloutzian, 2010); Learning Theory, flower essences, essential oils, physical release (van der Kolk, 1987); and mind-body-spirit chakra balancing, prayers, and meditation. The following are the seven steps of the Biopsychosocial & Eco-Spiritual Model:

I *Assess Levels of Distress, Disagreement, or Conflict:* Participants are given a written questionnaire that helps them define the kind of dispute they are working on and elicits the impact of this dispute or conflict. Formal assessment instruments may also be provided, such as the Harvard Trauma Checklist and the Heartland Forgiveness Scale.

II *Encourage Expression of Feelings:* One at a time, each participant in the group is encouraged to describe the conflict from his or her perspective and express feelings in the “here and now” in relation to the dispute or conflict that has been identified and described.

III *Provide Empathy and Validation:* Each participant’s feelings are validated by the mediator, group facilitator, or group members. Emphasis is placed on understanding others and putting one’s feet in an opponent’s shoes. When disputes rupture an individual’s link with the group, an intolerable sense of isolation, helplessness, and victimization may occur. Providing validation and empathy in such a group setting will transform these negative effects by reestablishing the mutual exchange between the individuals in conflict, while the presence of others in the group witnessing this process validates the experiences.

IV *Encourage Discovery and Expression of Meaning:* Participants are asked, “What lessons, meaning, or positive associations did you discover about yourself as a result of this dispute?” This question is based on Viktor Frankl’s logotherapeutic principles: There may be a positive meaning discovered in the worst catastrophe, and there are lessons to be learned from the most difficult conflicts. The facilitator helps opposing parties

discover their own dark side in order to transform it into lessons learned. Dr. Martin Luther King has said that only light can transform darkness. Participants are invited to focus on individual and collective growth, strength, and meanings that naturally arise out of any dispute or conflict. Forgiveness is also reinforced here as a tool for self-care and letting go of resentments, revenge, and anger, which only reinforce the conflict or dispute, poison the individuals involved, and hinder the process of healing and peacemaking.

V Provide Didactic Information: Practical tools and information are shared on how to gradually integrate the conflict resolution information that has been provided and care for oneself as a caregiver/mediator. Information is also shared on the steps of practicing forgiveness and how to transform the dispute, as well as how violence begets more violence and is transmitted through seven generations. Information on assertiveness (COPE Model, Kalayjian) and anger management is also shared, as well as the UN Declaration for Human Rights.

VI Instill Eco-Centered Caring: Practical tools for helping participants connect with Mother Earth are shared, as well as ways to care for one's environment. An emphasis is placed on starting with the care of one's environment and expanding to the larger globe, as well as being mindful of a systems perspective. Participants learn how we impact our environment and how our environment impacts us.

VII Demonstrate Body, Breathing, and Movement-Centered Healing: Breath is used as a natural medicine and healing tool. Since no one can control nature, other people, or what happens outside of one's self, participants are assisted in being mindful of how they can respond to the dispute instead of reacting to it. Participants are guided on how to use breath toward self-empowerment, creating peace within, and engendering gratitude, compassion, faith, strength, and forgiveness in response to conflicts. Integrative tools are also introduced, such as flower essences, essential oils, chakra alignment, Electromagnetic Field Balancing, meditation, prayers, etc.

Dr. Ani Kalayjian is a Board Certified Expert in Traumatic Stress, the Founder and President of the Association For Trauma Outreach & Prevention (ATOP) Meaningfulworld, Board Member of the Committee of Spirituality, Values, and Global Concerns (CSVGC-NY at UN), Chair of the Mentoring Committee of the American Psychological Association's International Division, author of *Disaster & Mass Trauma* (Vista, 1995), Chief Editor of *Forgiveness: Psychological Pathways for Conflict Transformation and Peace Building* (Springer, 2010), and Chief Editor of II volume of *Mass Trauma & Emotional Healing Around the World: Rituals & Practices for Healing and Meaning-Making* (Praeger, 2010). For more information, kindly visit www.meaningfulworld.com and contact DrKalayjian@Meaningfulworld.com.