



## Donald Meichenbaum

Dr. Donald Meichenbaum is one of the world's leading experts on psychotherapy and cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT). He has dedicated his life to advancing the understanding and treatment of mental health issues through research, clinical practice, and education.

After earning his PhD in Clinical Psychology from Stanford University in 1966, Dr. Meichenbaum served as a professor at the University of Waterloo until his retirement in 1998. Now, as Distinguished Professor Emeritus, he maintains a private practice as a clinical psychologist.

In addition to co-founding cognitive-behavioural therapy, he is a leader in the treatment and prevention of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). As a clinician and researcher, he has treated all age groups for traumas suffered from violence, abuse, accidents, and illness. His innovative approach has become a cornerstone of trauma therapy.

Dr. Meichenbaum has published extensively on topics related to trauma, stress, and anxiety. He is the author and co-author of several works, including *Roadmap to Resilience*. His book, *Cognitive Behavior Modification: An Integrative Approach*, considered a classic, has been translated into numerous languages.

Dr. Meichenbaum's contributions to psychology have earned him accolades and awards, including the Lifetime Achievement Award from the Clinical Division of the American Psychological Association. In 1991, a North American survey of clinical psychologists named Dr. Meichenbaum one of the ten most influential psychotherapists of the 20th century.

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*Compiled with notes from staff of Communications and Public Affairs, now University Communications*

# Dealing with loss

BY RON CHAMPION

## The average age of University of Waterloo retirees is about 75.

At that age, odds are that every retiree has had to deal with the death of a loved one. Most likely that of a parent or other elderly relative. Possibly a sibling, a good friend, a spouse or partner – for some, even a child, perhaps the most grievous loss of all.

We survivors live on. We try to adapt to the hole in our life. We struggle to understand. We have more questions than answers.

How do we survive such a loss? Our faith may offer comfort. Friends and family offer love and support. And an inner strength – *resilience* – can help us get through the darkest days.

Donald Meichenbaum, Distinguished Professor Emeritus of Psychology at Waterloo, is recognized for his expertise in resilience and cognitive-behavioural therapy, as you can see in the sidebar article. He believes that resilience is not merely an innate trait but one that can be developed. We can learn coping strategies and resilience-building techniques to better navigate life's challenges.



RESILIENCE: THE CAPACITY TO WITHSTAND OR TO RECOVER QUICKLY FROM DIFFICULTIES – THE ABILITY TO “BOUNCE BACK”

To that end, Dr. Meichenbaum is making available his book *Roadmap to Resilience* to help individuals cope with adversity, grief, and loss.

The web version of *Roadmap to Resilience*, which more than 45,000 persons in 138 countries have downloaded, consists of two appendices with tips to help readers build and maintain resilience.

Appendix A lists six resilience themes: Physical, Interpersonal, Emotional, Thinking, Behavioral, and Spiritual. For each, Dr. Meichenbaum suggests resilience-bolstering behaviours – “actions” that, taken together, form an action plan for the reader.

### **For example, the Physical aspect recommends eight behaviours or actions:**

1. *Take care of the body.*
2. *Exercise regularly.*
3. *Get quality sleep.*
4. *Eat healthy.*
5. *Avoid mood-altering drugs or overuse of alcohol.*
6. *Use healthy coping procedures – engage nature.*
7. *Avoid high-risk dangerous behaviours.*
8. *Consider other examples of ways to keep physically fit.*

Clicking on any action provides specifics about the action, its importance, feedback from both professionals and clients, and sometimes other resources and questions for self-reflection.

### **Appendix A also includes recommendations that address the Emotional theme:**

26. *Cultivate positive emotions (use hobbies and pleasurable activities).*
27. *Make a “bucket list” of emotional uplifting activities and then just do it!*
28. *Show “grit” – the ability to pursue with determination long-term goals (“Choose hard right over easy wrong.”).*
29. *Use positive humour.*
30. *Express gratitude.*

Appendix A provides 101 resilience-building recommendations.

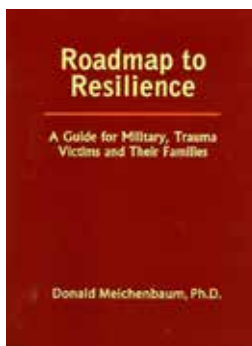
Appendix B is an alphabetical list of resilience behaviours. For example, scrolling to “G” leads to resilience behaviours or actions for Goal Setting, Gratitude, Grief, and Guilt. Warning: this appendix is addictive! I couldn’t help but scroll

through to entries on building communication skills, managing conflict, the importance of humour, and the advantages of pets. (Pets do help you to meet people!)

An addendum provides strategies to cope with the stress of the coronavirus pandemic. Included are recommendations for healthcare providers, the importance of sharing positive emotions, and the use of spiritual coping strategies.

Dr. Meichenbaum states there are two general classes of stressors: those that can be changed and those that cannot. And there are two general classes of coping strategies: those that are direct-action problem-solving and those that are palliative and self-soothing. It is a kind of 2x2 arrangement – changeable versus non-changeable stressors, and active versus palliative coping strategies.

*Roadmap to Resilience* is easy to read; implementing its advice is our challenge. None of the recommended actions perplexes. Reading *Roadmap to Resilience* provides an excellent opportunity to reflect on those we've lost, on life in general and personal choices, and on the people in our lives.



You can access *Roadmap to Resilience* for free at [roadmaptoresilience.wordpress.com](http://roadmaptoresilience.wordpress.com), or simply search for “roadmap to resilience wordpress.” The book is also available at bookstores for \$50.

If you prefer listening to reading, check out Dr. Meichenbaum’s video at [melissainstitute.org/scientific-articles/meichenbaum-d/](http://melissainstitute.org/scientific-articles/meichenbaum-d/) or search for “donald meichenbaum melissa,” where you’ll find links to several articles on resilience and the video presentation on resilience. ♥

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*Ron Champion is Vice President of the UWRA and co-chair of the CURAC 2024 national conference, to be held at UW May 22-24, 2024. He retired in 2017.*





# The Melissa Institute for Violence Prevention and Treatment

BY JUDI JEWINSKI

The Melissa Institute for Violence Prevention and Treatment, a non-profit organization, is based at the University of Miami's School of Education and Development. Its mission is to "prevent violence and promote safer communities through education and application of research-based knowledge through education, community service, research support and consultation." Founded in 1996, the institute is named for Melissa Aptman, a university student who was murdered in St. Louis. Her violent death led her parents and friends to establish the institute to honour Melissa's memory and work towards preventing similar acts of violence.

Since the institute's beginning, Dr. Donald Meichenbaum has played a pivotal role as director of research. His contributions have been instrumental in advancing the Melissa Institute's goal to reduce violence through education, research, and advocacy. Dr. Meichenbaum notes that his position "is completely voluntary and it is my passion."

One area where Dr. Meichenbaum's contributions have had special impact is in the development and dissemination of evidence-based strategies for violence prevention and intervention. His extensive work on CBT and trauma therapy has helped researchers understand and respond to the psychological aspects of violence, including the effects of trauma and PTSD.

The Melissa Institute facilitates training programs and workshops to equip mental health professional, educators, and community leaders with the knowledge and tools to address violence effectively. One of these educational opportunities, according to the TMI website, is facilitator training for the ACT Raising Safe Kids program in partnership with the American Psychological Association's Office of Violence Prevention, which teaches positive parenting skills to parents and caregivers of children up to age 8. Such efforts help individuals and organizations implement evidence-based practices in work with at-risk populations and victims of violence.

In addition to its awards and scholarship programs, the Melissa Institute hosts an extensive archive of research and resources related to violence prevention, including such topics as aggression, bullying, family violence, and suicide prevention. ♡

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FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT

[melissainstitute.org](http://melissainstitute.org)

*Judi Jewinski is a member of the UWRA Board and co-editor of WATimes.*

