

Melanie Payne, LMSW, for Innovative, Accountability-Based Approaches to Trauma-Informed Mental Health Care

Baltimore-Based Licensed Master Social Worker and Founder of Mel's Logic Advances Experiential Therapy Models Focused on Emotional Regulation, Behavioral Change, and Youth Engagement



Baltimore, Maryland Jun 18, 2026 ([IssueWire.com](http://www.IssueWire.com)) - Melanie Payne, LMSW, also known as Coach M, is a Licensed Master Social Worker and mental health professional recognized for her innovative, hands-on approach to therapy, program development, and client engagement. Based in Baltimore,

Maryland, Payne has built a distinguished reputation for helping adolescents, adults, and justice-involved individuals develop healthier emotional responses, improve decision-making skills, and achieve lasting personal growth through structured, accountability-driven therapeutic interventions.

Payne is the Founder of Mel's Logic, a mental health practice dedicated to delivering individual and group therapy services grounded in cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT), trauma-informed care, anger management techniques, and experiential learning. Her clinical philosophy is centered on the belief that therapy should be practical, interactive, and directly applicable to real-life challenges, particularly for individuals navigating complex emotional, social, and behavioral environments.

Through Mel's Logic, Payne facilitates structured therapeutic programming designed to strengthen emotional regulation, encourage personal accountability, and support sustainable behavioral change. She works extensively with adolescents and adults, including justice-involved populations, using evidence-based CBT techniques combined with real-world problem-solving exercises and interactive engagement strategies. Her approach empowers clients to identify negative thought patterns, challenge maladaptive beliefs, and take ownership of their decisions and behaviors.

A key element of Payne's work is her proprietary Experiential Engagement & Accountability-Based Therapy Model, an innovative framework designed to improve client participation, retention, and long-term outcomes. This model integrates emotional awareness, behavioral accountability, and experiential learning methods to create a dynamic and highly engaging therapeutic environment. Rather than relying solely on traditional talk therapy, Payne incorporates structured activities that encourage clients to actively participate in their own healing process.

Her curriculum includes several signature programs designed to address specific psychological and behavioral challenges. "Don't Lose Your King" uses chess-based strategy concepts to teach decision-making, foresight, and life planning skills. "Stinking Thinking" focuses on identifying and restructuring cognitive distortions that influence behavior and emotional responses. "Reclaiming Disowned Parts" supports identity integration and emotional awareness, helping clients reconnect with suppressed or fragmented aspects of themselves in a safe and structured way.

Throughout her career, Payne has demonstrated a deep commitment to community-based mental health work and group facilitation. She has led men's and women's therapy groups, designed life skills curricula for youth, and created music therapy-inspired interventions aimed at improving emotional expression and engagement. Her use of therapeutic games, guided discussions, role-playing exercises, and interactive tools has proven especially effective in increasing participation among individuals who may otherwise disengage from traditional therapeutic models.

Payne earned her Master of Social Work from Morgan State University and her Bachelor's Degree from Full Sail University. Her academic achievements include graduating Magna Cum Laude, being named Elmer Martin Student of the Year, and induction into the Phi Alpha Kappa Zeta Social Work Honors Society. She is currently pursuing additional specialization through ADHD Certification and Trauma-Informed Care Certification, further strengthening her clinical expertise and professional development.

Licensed in the State of Maryland, Payne remains committed to reshaping how therapy is delivered, particularly for underserved and high-risk populations. Her mission is to transform traditional clinical approaches into engaging, accountability-based systems that empower individuals to take control of their emotions, behaviors, and long-term life outcomes.

"What I enjoy most is working with youth in the inner city who are often labeled as 'bad kids' but who I

know just need a different level of structure and consistency,” says Payne. “Most people are afraid to work with these young people, but I’m on the battlefield—I tell people to bring them to me so we can figure this out together.”

She continues, “If everybody keeps being afraid, we’re never going to find a solution. I love connecting with them and showing them how to help themselves. The schools I work in are already written off—secondary schools with shootouts and fights every single day—but when I don’t show up, the students want to know why I wasn’t there. They’ll say, ‘We missed you last week,’ and they show me their softer side. That’s where my inner peace is—working with them and connecting with them.”

Payne is also currently writing a book focused on transforming trauma into triumph, drawing from her own lived experiences of overcoming severe childhood trauma, including sexual assault, attempted suicide, molestation, and surviving being set on fire. The forthcoming book explores how these experiences, though not fully understood at the time, shaped her resilience, purpose, and professional calling.

At the heart of Payne’s work is a guiding belief: “People live through the stories they tell about themselves, and those stories can be rewritten.” Through both her clinical practice and her personal journey, she helps individuals challenge limiting narratives, reclaim their identities, and build healthier futures grounded in resilience, accountability, and hope.

Now working with a writing coach to complete the project, Payne aims to inspire others to recognize strength through adversity and to understand the possibility of healing beyond trauma. Through her clinical work, curriculum development, and upcoming publication, she continues to position herself as a leading voice in experiential, accountability-driven mental health care.

Learn more about Melanie Payne:

Through her America’s Best in Medicine profile: <https://americasbestinmedicine.com/connect/Melanie-Payne>

America’s Best in Medicine

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Source : Melanie Payne

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