



Resources for mentally and emotionally challenging times:

Some folk are doing well in themselves, others are struggling, and others still feel like they are on an emotional and mental roller coaster. It is hard to make decisions, be productive and connect with others when our nervous systems are anxious and struggling in regular times – it is especially hard during times of crisis. The following resources may provide some pastoral (not counselling) support for folk during this difficult time - for themselves, or as they recognise the signs in others.

- **Great resources available online and through Apps that support mental and emotional well-being:**
 - [Head to Health](#) – Australian Government Department of Health COVID-19 support.
 - [MindSpot](#) – Online assessment and treatment for anxiety and depression – recognised by the Australian Government.
 - [Beyond Blue](#) - with extra support during COVID-19 – see the [Coronavirus Mental Wellbeing Support Service](#); see also [The Check-in App](#) (while designed for young people, it has some **great suggestions for anyone** concerned for a friend or family member of any age), and resources for [Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities](#).
 - [Smiling Mind](#) – including [Thrive Inside](#) which offers specific **support as we spend extended times at home**; and [Digital Care Packs](#) to support kids through COVID-19 and beyond. Also available as an [App](#).
 - [Headspace Australia](#) – [with specific links for COVID-19 support](#).
 - [Black Dog Institute](#) – **general mental health resources**, with some targeted support for COVID-19, including [Working from home: a checklist to support your mental health](#).
 - [Bite Back](#) – Black Dog Resources for **Youth**.
 - [Emerging Minds](#) – including a [toolkit for supporting children's mental health during a pandemic](#) (with **skills applicable for all!**)
 - [Headspace](#) – also available as an [App](#).
 - [Calm](#) – also available as an App.



- ***Taking some time to be still and quiet to slow down and listen to nature can work wonders.*** The following are some ideas that can be practiced at home, in front-yards, in back-yards, in other places (given lifting of restrictions). Some benefit can apparently be gained even by watching nature videos with these practices in mind if you can't go out.
 - [Dadirri](#) - an Aboriginal practice of [inner deep listening](#). The linked explanations come from the Northern Territory. Where you have connections with local Aboriginal people and you can connect with them in these times, take the opportunity to ask them about their practice of inner deep listening.
 - [Forest bathing or forest therapy](#) - a spiritual practice that originated in Japan. See how it looks in [Melbourne/Victoria](#).
 - **Home gardeners** world-wide are finding their garden helps keep them more balanced generally, but especially during COVID-19 (I know being in mine helps me very much!)
- ***Ambiguous loss, disenfranchised grief and COVID-19.*** Many are feeling loss that is unclear, full of uncertainty, not knowing what is coming next - at home, work, church, society, etc. For some, this is linked to anxiety because they do not know exactly why they are feeling loss, or whether it is ok to feel that way. Back in the 1970's, Dr Pauline Boss developed the term, "*ambiguous loss*" in her work with people who had family members away at war. She then developed this work further with those who had a family member experiencing dementia. Dr Boss' work on ambiguous loss has application to trauma and the time we now face due to COVID-19. Researchers in Australia are also studying what has been termed, "*disenfranchised grief*". Professor Jane Fisher and Senior Research Fellow Maggie Kirkman from Monash University are seeking to understand COVID-19's impact on Australian adults, including the effects of disenfranchised grief. Some useful resources around ambiguous loss and disenfranchised grief are:
 - [COVID-19 and its Ambiguous Losses: How to Cope with the Stress and Anxiety](#) – a YouTube clip where Dr Boss speaks about COVID-19 and ambiguous loss (a great listen with some PPT slides).
 - [COVID-19 and Ambiguous Loss](#) – a written explanation about ambiguous loss generally and how this relates to living in a pandemic.
 - [Grieving life and loss](#) - from the American Psychological Association. This is more aimed at therapists but there are some important points in this too.
 - [Coronavirus: Recognising disenfranchised grief amid COVID-19](#) - from Monash University.
 - [Disenfranchised Grief](#) - from The Australian Centre for Grief and Bereavement.