

A RESOURCE GUIDE TO HEALING ACTIVITIES FOR ECOGRIEF CIRCLES AND WORKSHOPS



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Hints for Action From the Resource Guide: A Quick Summary

- Groups can meet and individuals can act in the face of negative emotions about climate change and the state of earth's living systems, in order to take steps to express and share feelings of grief and anxiety.
- Important resources to borrow ideas from and to adapt them to the local situation are the Good Grief Network and The Work That Reconnects (Joanna Macy). Charles Eisenstein and Margaret Wheatley are also leading thinkers.
- It is crucial that leaders of any healing group created or workshop held spend time to fine-tune its purpose, ideally with input from participants.
- Case examples show that, in most cases with a healing focus, it is important to separate ecogrief and ecoanxiety support and healing activities, from any political action component at any single event. That's not to say feelings aren't important or can't be acknowledged before, during or after political action, but the healing initiatives profiled here, were all separated in time and space from public action.
- Healing the land and self are intertwined in Aboriginal culture, and there are many opportunities to be allies of the traditional custodians and participate locally, as invited and with permission, in learning and healing activities.
- There is a rich set of activities that an ecogrief group or workshop can undertake, ranging from systematic progression through the Good Grief Frame, to a unique match of group process techniques including healing and discussion circles, reflective nature walks, outdoor rituals and ceremonies, meditation, bodywork, and engagement with the visual/musical and written arts and spiritual teachers.
- There is a rich body of knowledge about this topic, so you are encourage to peruse the Appendices, reading/resources list and Good Grief Network pages. This resource guide is simply a point of departure.
- Self-care activities are critical in continuing ecogrief/ecoanxiety and activist work, and nurturing practices abound at the individual and community level.

- It is important to create sacred space when groups meet, especially indoors, in order to strengthen the connection to nature. Preparation of a place for offerings or a central altar, décor and windows, candles and the management of silence are all components of allowing a healing communal energy to emerge.
- Groups all organize differently dependent on purpose and ‘membership,’ whether that be meeting in public space (most common) or homes, free or by donation (most common) or charging a fee, and shared leadership (most common) or solo initiatives. In the Canadian case, mental health professionals were contributors to the group.
- Body work is important to get people out of their heads and into how their emotions feel in the body.
- Make sure to find time for happiness, fun and joy in the present. Ways to feel emotionally ‘lighter’ might simply start with gratitude sharing/journaling or playing games.
- Look for opportunities for your work to spread and generate new groups and new initiatives, so that Adelaide becomes a hub for healing and renewal, in support of personal growth and activism.
- Seek inspiration for and be aware of the (your) evolving vision for a brighter, more nurturing future for all beings.
- More...

I. Introduction

Ecological grief, or ecogrief, is a hot topic in activist and media circles right now. Ecological grief is “...the sadness felt in relation to experienced or anticipated ecological losses, including the loss of species, ecosystems, and meaningful landscapes due to acute or chronic environmental change” (Cunsolo & Ellis 2018). A complex bundle of factors and emotions such as helplessness, anger, guilt, shame, panic, and a sense of failure often accompany ecological mourning. People can also grieve for lost environmental knowledge and associated identities.

Ecoanxiety is the term used for a more generalized distress about what is happening to the natural world. While both ecogrief and ecoanxiety can be precipitated by climate change, here we mean response to a broader crisis than that --- loss and degradation of our planetary heritage.

The mainstream concept of environmental grief in western cultures goes back at least 15 years, albeit in a narrow context. But in the last year there’s been a deluge of coverage on multiple fronts. The Guardian explored how scientists cope with the emotional toll of day-to-day scientific work on the forefront of climate change research (<https://www.theguardian.com/science/2020/jan/12/how-scientists-are-coping-with-environmental-grief>). Recent Australian bushfires, with worldwide attention, especially

can be an ecogrief trigger across the broad citizenry. A professor and rural landholder had the broad media reach of the ABC to express grief through the eyes of an animal impacted the fires (https://www.abc.net.au/religion/learning-from-jimmys-grief-after-the-inferno/11862360?fbclid=IwAR19eqix_ffC84gjYk2nd7H86nl4RhTKtZkrZv_MruG5ggEeVzAXMm7OxwY_kkk). Even the country's premier scientific organization, CSIRO, had an article on ecogrief and the mental health implications (<https://blog.csiro.au/are-you-experiencing-eco-grief/>). Locally, a February 2020 fire-related gathering – entitled Heal & Hustle Climate Change Revolution - arranged by Collab4Good, was developed in response to a traumatized populace. The 5 hour Sunday event was primarily a series of breakout sessions about healing, recovery and action. The centerpiece was a session with an Aboriginal teacher taking the group through the Seven Phases to Integrating Loss and Grief [[http://www.events.humanitix.com.au/heal-and-hustle-climate-change-revolution?fbclid=IwAR2kwYqgmYQA7hKwxMfUs\)6mf2CzvRdHelluj-0_kwye4J5oJ70rHG8oYI](http://www.events.humanitix.com.au/heal-and-hustle-climate-change-revolution?fbclid=IwAR2kwYqgmYQA7hKwxMfUs)6mf2CzvRdHelluj-0_kwye4J5oJ70rHG8oYI)]

Climate change and the fires, however, are only part of the story about ecogrief and ecoanxiety. The work on this resource guide started before the early 2020 emergence of the coronavirus. The media has suggested that ecogrief and ecoanxiety might be compounded by the pandemic, and certainly the issues are intertwined. The virus crisis shows us, optimistically, that radical changes in how we live can occur very quickly when people are convinced of the need to do so. At the same time, it is possible the emergency started because of human encroachment into wild places, and we are warned of the dangers of future epidemics or significant health threats. While there is no conclusive evidence, it is possible that the same strategies outlined here for coping with psychological stress from environmental change, might – with distinct variants - be applicable whether the root cause is climate change, wildfires, or pandemic impacts on society and individual lives. The resource guide has not been modified to reflect social distancing or the prevalent use of zoom technology and virtual gatherings. The situation is in rapid flux so we'll leave adaptability to the reader, with the fundamental belief that the topics covered reflect a core set of important tools in addressing ecogrief/ecoanxiety, whatever the root cause.

Feeling environmental loss, as Cunsolo and Landman (2017) note in their introduction to the cutting edge *Mourning Nature: Hope at the Heart of Ecological Grief and Loss*, is a matter of recognizing that we are part of a community. As Buddhist ecoactivist and scholar Joanna Macy says, it tells us that we care. The resources section at the end lists some of the ecogrief articles in the news, and the reader is directed to the rich collection of the latest reflections, events and work on ecogrief at the Facebook page Eco-grief Resources. We'll accept that mental stress from observing planetary conditions is a serious issue for a portion of the public, and move to what to do about it.

The purpose of this booklet is to provide a resource guide and menu of ideas for individuals or groups starting to plan activities or meet regularly in the ecogrief/ecoanxiety arena. We'll

accept that ecogrief and ecoanxiety are serious issues for a portion of the public, which needs to be examined. We then will consider what to do about it. The intention is that while leaders will be guided by personal experience, knowledge and serendipity, that it is also useful to have a sort of simple roadmap for activity options I.e. What might this group do or what might this workshop content cover? This resource guide offers a limited compilation of some of the exciting initiatives on this topic so relevant to our times. The general format is to bring together 3 streams of thought:

- (1) the Good Grief Framework developed in Canada as an holistic way of addressing an individual's environmental sorrow within a structure of group support and communal healing;
- (2) discuss an array of action steps and group processes to address ecogrief, mostly – but not all- - guided by the Work That Reconnects; and
- (3) concluding with a closing nod to the future and transformative work by authors such as Charles Einstein and Margaret Wheatley, and the centrality of Indigenous perspectives and female voices.

This information is supplemented with selected case studies of what other clusters of concerned individuals are doing locally, around Australia, and worldwide. The thinking is that the Resource Guide will be an active document with ongoing user input. Appendix A provides annotations on 5 new books that show the urgent immediacy of the ecogrief/ ecoanxiety topic and the complex link to mental health, wellbeing and spiritual practice --- Davenport (2017), Ford (2020), Grose (2020), Malcolm (2020) and Weber (2020).

II. Ecogrief and the Good Grief Framework

“The Good Grief Network’s unique 10-step program aims to build personal resilience and empowerment while strengthening community ties to combat despair, inaction and eco-anxiety on the collective level.

Ten meetings. Ten weeks. Small groups. Heart-centred process work.”

The Good Grief (GG) website lists 8 active groups in Canada, the US and UK, with an Australia (Melbourne) ‘coming soon,’ and 3 online meetings hosted by the creators. The 14-page straight-to-the-point user-friendly manual has a 1-page overview of each step, along with a script and recommendation for meetings, and an adaptable code of conduct outlining expectations and norms for participants (to sign).

The Adelaide Sustainability Centre purchased the Good Grief (GG) manual and can help you and your group access that information through The Joinery. There is also a short summation at <https://goodgriefnetwork.medium.com/tools-for-the-awakening-1f69dbb932c0> .

Also be aware that the GG network maintains an impressive resource page at <https://www.goodgriefnetwork.org/resources/>, and even nonmembers can click on dozens of articles, videos, poetry and courses. There are also 18 podcasts archived at <https://www.goodgriefnetwork.org/podcast-2/>. These resources can be matched to the step of the GG process, or even if your group doesn't follow the GG framework (Fig 1), the materials can be used to customize workshops or sharing and discussion circles.

Figure 1. Ten Steps and Five Phases to Personal Resilience in a Chaotic Climate

Systemic	1. Accept the problem and its severity 2. Acknowledge that I am part of the problem & the solution
Surrender	3. Practice being with uncertainty 4. Confront my own mortality & the mortality of all
Shadow work	5. Do inner work 6. Develop awareness of brain patterns & perception
Self-care	7. Practice gratitude 8. Take breaks & rest as needed
Action	9. Show up 10. Reinvest myself into meaningful efforts

The user-friendly steps are common sense and only necessitate some brief remarks, with the exception of an expanded step 8, 'Take breaks and rest as needed.' Here in Adelaide and in other international settings, much of the focus on ecogrief work has centered on self-care activities (step 7), so there's a body of thinking and resources. Note also that the 10-step process flows through a progression of 5 major stages (Fig 1): looking at the big picture (systems), letting go and surrender, personal growth and healing (which they call shadow work), nurturing and rejuvenating ourselves through self-care, and cycles of action and involvement.

Step 1: Accept the problem and its severity

If overdone, this step would seem to have the potential to overwhelm well-informed and sensitive participants who are seeking out relief and release from eco-grief/eco-anxiety. But done right, the step is more about the bravery to not look away, and seeking a realistic balance between false optimism and overwhelming pessimism. The Pachamama Alliance

'Awakening the Dreamer, Changing the Dream' program mentioned several places in this resource guide, starts in the same place and commits to not let people stay stuck in despair. But it is a stage to move through, probably more than once.

Step 2: Acknowledge that I am part of the problem and the solution

We mentioned at the start how complex and multi-faceted ecogrief is, with elements of sadness, shame and recognition of hypocrisy. An excellent writing to elaborate is scholar-activist Amy Sparks' chapter (2019) _ "The authentic hypocrisy of ecological grief," attached (Appendix B). It provides both a simple way to think about ecogrief and articulates the unease of personal feelings.

Step 3: Practice being with uncertainty

The dynamism of the world and resilience of our lives are key themes here, versus an artificial solidity. Learning and practicing surrender to the constant change and adaptive systems is imperative.

Step 4: Confront my own mortality and the mortality of all

It is a truism in modern society that the ultimate remaining taboo is talking about death. The chapter "Deathstyle" in the book *The Wonderbox* expands on how this societal 'ban' on dialogue about mortality has evolved historically and how we can shift to more openness now. This difficult but valuable step requires surrender in terms of facing the limited life span of all living things.

Step 5: Do the inner work and feel the feelings

This step is about ongoing personal growth whereby the individual is on a lifelong path to deal with emotions rather than running away from difficult feelings, as consistent with principles of psychological work. Joanna Macy, whose *Work That Reconnects* is outlined in detail later, says at any one time engaged humans are either saving what is left of the natural world and intact community, creating a new future with new models, or healing the self. While much personal transformation can occur in community, there are some shifts that can only occur at the individual level. This is Jung's shadow work, meaning exploring the hidden and even unconscious parts of our makeup that we may hide.

Step 6: Develop awareness of how our brains work

The goal here is to become reflective, rather than reactive, especially in interactions that are part of our activism. The GG model suggests practices like yoga and mindfulness are beneficial in training the mind, and also help to uncover our shadow side.

Step 7: Practice gratitude

Advice to keep a mostly positive mindset is ubiquitous in self-help circles, which can include gratitude practices. Oprah Winfrey is one of the pioneers of this thinking; she popularized

daily gratitude journals over 2 decades ago. Ecogrief resources commonly quote grief expert Francis Weller:

“The work of the mature person is to carry grief in one hand and gratitude in the other, and to be stretched large by them.”

Step 8: Take breaks and rests as needed

This step is about listening to the wisdom of the body and the importance to nurture ourselves as we are challenged for balance in a busy world.

Self-care Solutions and Strategies

Steps 6 and 8 (especially) of the GG Framework address self-care, but the topic as covered prioritizes withdrawal from stress, rather than also being energized. In addition to these generalities described in the GG model, Adelaide activists generated more specific strategies for coping with ecogrief/ecoanxiety. Local psychologist Dee Sunyata, part of the team that created the first Adelaide ecogrief workshop, created a list of actions about how to acknowledge, respect and honour our grief, emphasizing that that doesn't mean indulging or wallowing in it. Participants in the first healing workshop were also asked to briefly share how they coped with ecogrief at the personal, community and political levels (Fig 2). Table 1 compares their responses at the personal level.

Figure 2. Workshop participant coping strategies

PERSONAL/INDIVIDUAL	LOCAL/COMMUNITY	POLITICAL "BIG PICTURE"
Yoga	Living Smart Courses	Extinction Rebellion
Meditation	Join your community garden	Contact your MP
Clean House	Get to know your neighbours	Join wilderness society
Sweeping the floor (using no electricity)	Bring in enviro initiatives at your school/work/group	SUPPORT (FINANCIALLY, MARCHES) AN ENVIRO. ORGANISATION THAT YOU BELIEVE IN THEIR WORK
Swimming in the sea	eg. 'Roots & Shoots'	Protesting
Beach walks	Do small, helpful actions with friends/family, don't wait for permission of a leader figure.	Sign Petitions
Use the power of breath to release feelings	Mutual Aid - Ask for support	Create petitions
Collect things from the bush	Start a conversation -	Change stories, vision "dream" (Pachamama Alliance)
Sing in the car	Exhibitions inspired by nature - attend/participate	
Look for laughs	Group Quilting	
Concentrate on what I CAN do (volunteering)	Speak up for Trees eg to Local Council	
Gardening	Collaboration with INDIGENOUS people	
* Greeting the day ritual - breath @ Standing Rock		
Watching a fire		
Cooking		
Lifting heavy weights (for fun)		
My true, deeper self		
Spirituality		
Journal writing		
Basket weaving		

Personal Self-Care Strategies for the Individual

The psychologist first emphasized a mental framework for undertaking the steps to cope, starting with allowing the feelings, whatever they are, to flow and be expressed – while recognizing the importance of the varying need for solitude or social support. These ways of thinking are common to the positive psychology research about the importance of living

Table 1. Personal self-care strategies generated

<i>From Mental Health Professional</i>	<i>From Workshop Participants</i>
Allow sadness and tears Take time for solitude, or for company, as you need Gratitude – cultivate a practice of appreciation Give yourself permission to *not* be with people who are disrespectful of your experience Think “big picture” – call to mind the size of our solar system, our galaxy, the universe... - broaden the temporal context of our lifetime, recall the evolution mapped in geology...	Spirituality Concentrate on what I CAN do e.g. volunteering
Breathe	Use the power of the breath to release feelings
Yoga class	Yoga
Meditate, use ‘mindfulness’	Meditation
Spend time in nature (incl forest bathing)	Collect things from the bush
Swimming, snorkelling	Swimming in the sea Beach walks
Gardening – grow food / flowers; composting	Gardening
Sing for joyfulness	Sing in the car
Remember or find rhythms, with drumming or dancing	
Make, draw, paint a mandala	Basket weaving
Write a letter (apology?) to your descendants or the unborn children Write as if speaking to someone from 2100. Assume they are living in a beautiful and safe world, and answer their imaginary question ‘What did you do in your lifetime that put the world on the right track to avert disaster and create a just society?’	Journal writing
Bath (natural fragrances)	
Have a massage	
Play with a pet	
	Watching a fire
	Look for laughs
	Greeting-the-day ritual (outdoors)

in gratitude, with a positive mindset and avoiding contact with toxic people. Finally big picture thinking and/or invoking awe are critical; for an example see John Seed's exercise on imaging distances in our solar system (Appendix G). Workshop participants touched on a number of these issues throughout the day, and during this exercise, spirituality was used as a catch-all phrase with different personal meanings for coping with ecogrief as part of a bigger spiritual path of self-growth.

Beyond that, there was lots of commonality in self-care strategies, especially in terms of spending time in nature and creative pursuits, as would be expected. The attention to the mind-body link through yoga, meditation, mindfulness (being in the present moment) and the breath is indicative of this group as well. (There were even some breathwork practitioners in the workshop audience.) Gardening and all artistic forms were frequently mentioned. The greeting-the-day ritual was explained as a short series of self-inspired activities to start each day (e.g. touching the earth, reading prayer or poem, chant, offering), ideally held outdoors. These are certainly not complete lists, but simply demonstrate the rich variety of self-care and coping strategies.

Self-Care Strategies in Community at the Local Level

The psychologist and workshop attendees generated a helpful list of ways to be together to address ecogrief, both directly and indirectly. Asking for help as needed was seen as central to coping, and gardening was again seen as healing. Strategies marked with a * will be discussed further in the Eco-Action section.

- *Collaboration with indigenous people
- Ask for support; mutual aid important (both) / e.g. co-counselling
- Gardening together - set up a group or join a community garden (both)
- Quilting circles
- Start a conversation
- Get to know your neighbours
- Do small helpful actions for friends and neighbours; don't wait for permission
- Meals together
- *Healing circles
- *Engage in your, or a "faith" community (Christian, Buddhist, etc. ARRC)
- Living Smart courses to learn to live with a lower environmental impact
- Bring in environmental initiatives at your school, work or group (e.g. Jane Goodall's Roots and Shoots)
- *Attend and participate in exhibitions inspired by nature
- Speak up for the trees; e.g. to local Council. Taking action to create the world you want is actually a form of self-care, and at some points, will make you FEEL better.

Political and Systems-wide Strategies

The ideas for public activism were identical for both the professional and the audience. Liaise with and lobby your local Council members, as well as your State and Federal Members of Parliament. There were workshop participants who already take one action like this weekly.

Support with your time and money, if you can, those environmental groups whose work you believe in. Groups mentioned included Extinction Rebellion, WWF, Wilderness Society, 350°, 1 and Million Women. Attend rallies, protests, and vigils (in a spirit of co-existence, not anger). Start and sign petitions.

One unique resource mentioned was the Pachamama Alliance's 'Awakening the Dreamer, Changing the Dream' program, based on a partnership of the indigenous Achuar people of Ecuador and western NGOs. <https://www.pachamama.org/engage/awakening-the-dreamer> The Pachamama Alliance mission is to help bring forth an environmentally sustainable, spiritually fulfilling, ecologically just human presence on the planet. Pachamama is a Quechua word that roughly translates as "the sacred presence of the Earth, the sky, the universe and all time."

The Pachamama Alliance runs in-person events worldwide (Adelaide has 4 trained facilitators) and an online course to help individuals discern the best use of their skills to help change the world. The 4-part participatory format includes:

- 1) where are we now?;
- 2) how did we get here?;
- 3) What is possible now? and the New Story of Connection; and
- 4) Where do we – and you – go from here?

The final steps in the Good Grief process are:

Step 9: Show up

The main idea here is that when we are feeling vulnerable, we need to learn discernment about when to lean in and continue through the discomfort, at some point. Bravery and being true to ourselves are the main theme at this step.

Step 10: Reinvest in meaningful efforts

The previous steps are about gaining wisdom, energy and resilience from the Good Grief work, and now we can apply these attributes to operate in a difficult world from a place of calm, reverence and love.

III. Ideas Sampler from Home, and Around the World

To take implementation ideas further, here we provide a context of action to date so that ecogrief and environmental healing work doesn't have to start from scratch. As mentioned, the straightforward Good Grief process is being followed systematically by at groups worldwide, including a trained facilitator in Ballarat leading Melbourne events (Living Lightly with Love). Closer to Adelaide, a nascent ecogrief group - Gaia Grief & Gratitude – evolving during covid challenges, is meeting in Cumberland Park in 2021 as a more structured ecogrief circle (Marisa). A conference call was recently held with 5 individuals that wanted to start ecogrief work in Gawler, and the participants did trade piecemeal start-up ideas via email. This resource guide may be useful as a starting point to get ideas for emergent efforts. Each endeavour profiled will look different depending on initiators and local situation. Here we describe here a small sample of what is happening locally, nationally and internationally in ecogrief and ecoanxiety 'work.' While ancient practice for indigenous peoples, this relatively new ground for westerners mostly includes workshops and meeting circles at this point in time.

Australian Initiatives

A 3-hour Sunday afternoon workshop '**Transforming Despair: Reconnecting for Sustainable Activism**' was held at The Joinery on May 8 2019, organized by 4 concerned activists who hadn't worked together before. Due to the number of participants (30), time constraints and the volunteer's preferences, main elements were as follows:

- Establishing a welcome safe space, with smudging at entrance and a low table – with room for offerings - at the centre of the participant circle
- Acknowledgement of Country, icebreaker, introductions of facilitators and agenda, history of how we came to this point, activity guidelines (15min)
- Break into 4-5 person groups to share 'What is Grief?' (for me). Brief sample of ideas expressed with all participants. (25min)
- Joanna Macy video (15min)
- Silent art therapy (drawing opportunity) and creating nature mandala during and after break (30min)
- Brainstorming session "Tools for Healing" – what do you do? (results presented earlier). Spread out talking cards to start people off, and afterwards list on whiteboard. (20min)
- Evaluations and closing circle where asked to share a word about how feeling (5min).



Nature mandala created at **Transforming Despair** workshop Credit: Barbara Koth

The Wild South group has been quite active, and jointly with the Wilderness Society SA, held a Sunday event, **Climate Feelings: Clearing our Minds to Shape the Future**. Planned by some members of the same May 8 ad hoc group to build on the principles of equality and deep listening, they met on Nov 10th 2019 in Old Noarlunga for a Saturday afternoon (1-4:30). They charged \$15/\$10, with proceeds donated to SEED indigenous Youth Climate Network and the Fight for the Bight campaign. The 20 participants joined a facilitated healing circle in prepared sacred space, and they 'tried some things' by undertaking the following activities:

- The id (identification) game) builds trusts through shared experience. A series of prepared questions are asked and attendees divide into two groups based on individual answers. Who had time for breakfast today (yes/no)? Who rode their bike today? Who wishes they could have ridden their bicycle? The exercise took a long time as most individuals asked at least one impromptu question, and there was lots of laughter.
- Deep Listening: In pairs, each participant is listened to without interruption for a set time, and then they swap roles. A guiding question was offered for the listening pairs... How do you know you are feeling something about the climate? What do you do with those feelings?
- Joanna Macy's Truth Mandala (Work That Reconnects). The centre space is divided into the four quadrants of fear, anger, sadness, and emptiness, and as desired each individual holds a symbolic object and speaks to that personal emotion. The group is witness to whatever is shared, without interruption.
- Forest bathing for 45 minutes, since the venue had beautiful outdoor space.
- A general chat in the circle, which went well because there are so few opportunities for such untargeted interaction. It was the 2nd opportunity for deep listening.

There was also **Activist Wellbeing Day** held on Sunday February 9 2020 by Extinction Rebellion in Adelaide (10am-4pm). The announcement states:

“JOIN US IN QUIET CONTEMPLATION AND JOYFUL PLAY

The Activist Wellbeing Circle invites you to join us for a day of reconnecting and restorative practices including meditation, relaxation and movement.

- Share experiences and thinking on a ‘middle way’ between overwhelming empathy and fierce compassion
- Connect with what needs to be expressed and heard using the Joanna Macy’s ‘Work that Reconnects’
- Experience deep relaxation
- Celebrate in community with the rhythm & flow of Circle Dance (no prior mediation or dance experience necessary)

Throughout the day we will move through a rhythm that will take us from stillness to emotion back to stillness ending with a celebration of being in community together. We will be continuing to connect and move using the magic of the Five Rhythms.” The Five Rhythms are ... <https://www.5rhythms.com/gabrielle-roths-5rhythms/> (Note: discussed further in the strategy section 6 on bodywork).

In talking with the four women who planned and facilitated the Wellbeing Day for 15 attendees, the agenda had six core components:

- 20-minute meditation, where general instructions were given followed by silence;
- A teaching on the Buddhist Middle Path led by a lay practitioner, about how one lives a mindful life in these times;
- A guided deep relaxation exercise;
- A discussion of Joanna Macy’s approach to healing ecogrief as articulated in The Work That Reconnects;
- Triad/small group discussions about how people think about action and engagement; and
- A circle dance.

The organizers believe that having enough time (6 hours, with lunch and lots of breaks) and not feeling rushed was critical, as well as choosing space near the Parklands where attendees could go outdoors and weren’t stuck in a building all day.

There was an **Acknowledging Your Climate Grief workshop** in Sydney on Feb 22 2020 organized by Beyond Zero Emissions (BZE), who booked the non-profit Psychologists for a Safe Climate to facilitate (<https://www.psychologyforasafeclimate.org/>). The Facebook

invitation says: “We recognise the work so many are doing means immersing oneself in the realities of climate change every day. It's a heavy load on behalf of us all. For many it also means living with the here and now implications of climate change impacts. This workshop will offer a space to creatively express your feelings, including grief, and reflect on the emotional burden of your work.

We will also include a focus on caring for yourself so that you are able to continue, and even flourish in the work you do.”

The agenda for the afternoon kicked off seated in a circle for greetings, introduction and thanks. Then:

- Guided art therapy with a focus on feelings rather than facts about the Climate Emergency (3 groups)
- Talk on self-care and a guided meditation by one of the facilitators
- The Milling Exercise (Appendix D). An organizer described the process: “A group movement exercise led by a facilitator who directed the group to walk at varying speeds in a random crowd-like way in a wide open area of the hall, followed by stopping in pairs facing each other. We were asked to consider, look and think of the person opposite while the facilitator took 2-3 minutes to suggest various empathetic possibilities about the humanity, challenges and pain standing opposite (a different, somewhat more confronting and empathetic form of mindfulness). Lastly (pre-covid), we were asked to reach out to the person and make contact if we wished, clasp hands or offer a hug, whatever was comfortable or appropriate.”
- During final feedback each attendee was given two different coloured post-it notes and asked to write what they enjoyed most, and what self-care was needed going forward. The notes were shared aloud with the group if desired, before placing them in the middle of the circle beside a vase of fresh roses.

The 19 participants paid a small booking fee (\$22.19 Concession, \$43.29 Adult) through Eventbrite. Some wanted to find their purpose in assisting social transition, with most taking great relief in being among like minds and resolving to do this more. BZE attracted older and younger generations of both women and men, with half being activists and the other half being everyday people, even grandparents and government workers. It appears Facebook prioritised it in their feed, and BZE received good word-of-mouth on the event after a Newcastle Herald article set up by a (male) BZE activist with media contacts.

https://www.newcastleherald.com.au/story/6628678/climate-grief-workshop-to-reflect-on-fears-for-the-future/?fbclid=IwAR3JzfP_hFbqWgFF4pZidCP1gxmAP_pwsWILYtoCsU7_o7Udggb6qzaxhHxQ

The advice for getting attention was to move beyond Facebook. And the advice for drawing men to attend, since so many of these initiatives are created and attended by women, is to affiliate outreach with an organisation with strong male membership.

Sample of Overseas Initiatives

Calgary Eco-grief Support Circle:

This Canadian initiative was started by Laura as the outgrowth of an eco-book club, and since 2017 has spurred other Calgary grief initiatives. Online the group's banner says: 'Touching the hearth on the far side of despair,' a nod to Barbara Cecil's work. The support circle is described: "We are a group of Calgarians who seek to create a container in which we can mutually support each other in honouring and releasing the grief and gratitude, pain and awe that we feel for our Earth." Bimonthly midweek gatherings are hosted in her home, she facilitates, and she calls it a co-created gathering that centres around issues emergent for the members. That might include threatened beloved space, children's future, or general political frustration. Typically 3-9 persons attend. After trial-and-error the agenda has evolved as follows:

- Tea and nibbles in sacred space with candles and low lighting
- Outline agreements about confidentiality and space for silence
- Light candle for a guided meditation: e.g. walk through a natural setting, imagine a place of peace, use 5 senses such as wind on skin
- Participants pass around a piece of wood that they hold when speaking about how they are feeling
- No cross talk is allowed
- If time allows, there is interactive discussion
- Searching for a song to conclude the evening

Some hints are not to rush to comfort but to sit in uncomfortable silence, to get into the body and not just analyse, and to be confident about taking power back. Be aware that some issues or trauma require a therapist. The movement was profiled in the Calgary Journal ("We Need One Another") and there is a Facebook page (106 members) that can be accessed after contacting Laura. Many of the same individuals participate in the Climate Ribbon Project, where people write replies to the question 'What do you love and hope never to lose to climate change chaos?' on ribbons, which are hung on a tree moved around the community. See www.theclimateribbon.org The group has also held occasional social events such as a gratitude potluck on the solstice, or making a mandala.

Eco-Grief Support Circle Meet Up (Edmonton):

This Canadian group was started by a Greens activist. It meets every second Sunday in the Welling Centre, a facility offering personal wellbeing services and workshops. The Facebook page says: "We are just people like yourself: hurt, damaged, sensing that the future is shriveling, and suffering from a grief that we can name but that we do not know how to express. We are concerned about human existence on planet earth and about the lack of action regarding climate change, in particular. These meetings are for people suffering from Eco-Grief. Talking about it, sharing our grief, listening to others, can help. We will not try

and fix each other, but we will listen and collectively embrace our shared grief. Sharing, listening, and talking is healing just by itself. You can take action elsewhere since that is one of the other steps in the process.”

The group is based on general guidance from the Good Grief process. The agenda at the monthly gathering is a half hour meet and greet, an hour of support circle discussion, and a half hour of social time at the wellbeing centre. They always start with a land acknowledgement (acknowledging country in Australia) to recognise indigenous custodians. The norms of the group are shared: cell phones off, let people speak uninterrupted, do not offer advice unless asked, and confidentiality. A cadre of leaders share facilitation responsibilities as participants talk about their reactions and feelings as humans during a difficult time for humanity. The organizers make prominent the disclaimer that this is a self-help group with lay leadership and recommend professional help as needed, ending with the missive – “be gentle with yourself.”

The organizer said the agenda doesn’t need to be overly structured; “just call together a group and see what happens. The main advice was to keep in mind that the group is not about solutions or activism; that focus happens elsewhere. The idea is to hear and talk about how the current situation is affecting you, and what you might be doing to sit with or over time alleviate feelings of despair. This group also has a Facebook page sharing resources, videos and the event schedule, and I’d suggest skimming it for ideas and prompts.

Both Canadian groups have associations with mental health professionals, whether through membership or the meeting venue. [The following interview (Spotify) provides a context on eco-grief for social workers <https://anchor.fm/p-henderson/episodes/Agnieszka-Wolska--Registered-Social-Worker--Calgary-e98nje>].

Grief Composting Circles and Grief Tending Circles (UK)

Grief composting circles emerged from the progressive Transitions Town of Totnes (Somerset UK). They are different in that they are inspired (with permission) by the Dagara people of West Africa, and money is exchanged by minimum donation or ability to pay.

There are scheduled communal rituals from 4+ hours held in a dark yurt, to release personal and the earth’s sorrow and sometimes to create new ecological designs for the world. It is a complex deeply spiritual practice, with more details at <https://www.souland.org/about.html> Also southwest of London, another Transitions Network town well-known in sustainability circles is Frome; several variations of the Totnes ecogrief model are held there. They tend not to include the darkness component (i.e. composting metaphor) at regular monthly gatherings.

New Zealand's Wellbeing Guide for students (Climate Change Learning Programme):

Per an early 2020 article from The Guardian, New Zealand has moved to the forefront of climate education worldwide by introducing, as part of the mandated climate change curriculum, a unit helping 11-15 year olds overcome feelings of powerlessness by processing feelings of ecoanxiety

[<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/jan/13/new-zealand-schools-to-teach-students-about-climate-crisis-activism-and-eco-anxiety>]. Teacher resources at <http://nzcurriculum.tki.org.nz/Curriculum-resources/Education-for-sustainability/Tools-and-resources> include a wellbeing guide. Activities include tracking a “feelings thermometer to monitor emotions, learning how to change defeatist self-talk, and considering how feelings could generate action.” Students are a different audience than this resource guide addresses, but perusal of the guide may provide ideas for adult healing circles or workshop activities.

Global Online Initiatives

Active Hope Ongoing Support Group....Nourishment for the Great Turning.

This online support group is facilitated out of California for a worldwide group that pays a monthly \$40 fee. Based on the work of Joanna Macy and adrienne maree brown (*Emergent Strategy*), it primarily consists of topic-specific (e.g. deep ecology, storytelling, resourcing ourselves) conference calls with guests and discussion.

<https://musicasmedicineproject.org/event/3274075/523065766/active-hope-2020-support-group>

A Rocha Talks - Alone in a World of Wounds: Living with Ecological Grief (Canada host)

A Rocha, the Canadian environmental stewardship NGO, held an October 1 online gathering to explore the lived experience of ecological grief and to foster conversation on how to engage that grief in ways that promote sustainability and wellbeing. The 3-person international panel represented clinical counselling, clergy, academia, spiritual direction, theology and writing. Topics included what ecogrief looks like and varying human responses to ecological catastrophe, how to function with the ongoing stress, capturing hope, future visions, and the support role of churches. In addition to taking questions from a global audience, La Rocha provided significant follow-up learning resources.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k02PMQ1Tt-s> The event is presented here as just one of many ecogrief topic examples of online community, both local and worldwide, generated during the pandemic.

Climate/Environmental Scientist Support Group:

Scientists are also using online support groups to ‘share the tsunami of feelings’ that come with facing the implications of the ecological change they are studying. Five years ago an Australian initiative asked climate change scientists the question, “How does climate change make you feel?” Letters from all over the globe continue to come in to

<https://www.isthisshowyoufeel.com/ithyf5.html> and make for powerful reading and empathic response. The Guardian ran an associated story [<https://www.theguardian.com/science/2020/jan/12/how-scientists-are-coping-with-environmental-grief>], and some of the reactions scientists had might be relevant to the general public:

- Communicate rather than internalize the grief, and come together to share it
- Foster a love of the natural world in the next generation
- Recognize that unlike a human death which has an endpoint, ecogrief is ongoing, and shifts with time
- Talk to indigenous elders
- Find ways to mark our loss and create new rituals
- Importance of art and the creative process (e.g. photography of pants)

IV. Action Steps --- Including Aboriginal Ceremony and The Work That Reconnects

We draw from worldwide agendas and examples, reading and observation to propose at least 10 process activities that ecogrief workshop and meeting circles could adapt and use for both outdoor and indoor group processes. But first, the starting point is to embed these practices in Aboriginal connections to land and water, and to link ecogrief healing work to The Work that Reconnects (WTR) referenced in several events above. Foremost, we acknowledge that traditional custodians have been performing land and water healing ceremony for millennia, and as such this sacred activity is integrated in culture, and thus not new. WTR is a western-generated critical framework (Joanna Macy and colleagues) that draws on ecology, spirituality and psychology to build empowerment, creativity and resilience for transition to a sustainable world.

Aboriginal connections to land and water

One way of dealing with ecogrief and ecoanxiety is to become an ally to longstanding Aboriginal initiatives, by joining events as invited or learning more about cultural practice. The power of such engagement is illustrated in the comment from an Albury event attendee: "When I heard the Aboriginal woman say 'If we look after the land and the waters, they will look after us,' I never forgot that and it gives me comfort." Several current events locally and written resources deserve attention, and there are many more.

◆ Dupang Festival in Coorong 2018-2019 (not in 2020 due to covid)

The Dupang Festival is a corroboree with a difference - to share culture and heal the spirit. Marketed most recently through Adelaide's Fringe Festival in February, it brings together local, interstate and international Indigenous artists for a three-day camping festival of dance performances and workshops at a beautiful waterfront site adjacent to Coorong National Park on Ngarrindjeri land. This dance-camping festival provides an immersive cultural experience for everyone on Aboriginal land at Long Point on the Coorong. The Tal-Kin-Jeri dance group and others perform, there is night sky storytelling, and workshops such as basket weaving, woodcarving, bushfoods, and mathematics and dance for the several hundred attendees.

Tal-Kin-Jeri Director, Major 'Moogy' Sumner AM (Uncle Moogy / <https://www.ngarrindjeri-culture.org/about>), says "the last Dupang Festival was healing. People came to experience and learn about our culture, to be involved together. The story telling, the dancing, the fires, workshops, talking circles. We camped, we sang, we danced and together we went on a journey, which connected us to the spirits of this land and waters on our country. On behalf of the ancestors and people of this land – we are calling you to come together."

◆ Ringbalin – Murray River Healing Tour

Since 2010 Ngarrindjeri Songman and Elder Uncle Moogy has also led sunset ceremonies along the length of the Murray River connecting with local communities to share and record river stories, and sing and dance the spirit of the river to health. The many rivers of the Murray-Darling Basin have long been in crisis as irrigators have increasingly sought to extract more and more water from the system. The downstream effects of large-scale irrigation have devastated the lower reaches of the rivers, leading to dry lake beds, stagnant ponds and at times, the closing of the Murray Mouth and the degradation of the Coorong.

In the first year (2010), flooding rains followed the group down as they performed ceremonies to heal the rivers and dance the spirit of the land. Since then, alliances have been formed with Northern Basin Indigenous Nations, the Murray Lower Darling Rivers Indigenous Nations (MLDRIN) and the Murray Darling Basin Authority to promote the well-being of the river and to encourage more Indigenous participation in the process of restoring this great river system to health. In 2019 Tal-Kin-Jeri was invited by the Ngaran Ngaran elders to commence Ringbalin in the high country of the Snowy Mountains at the very source of the mighty Murray River. From April 12-21 2019, Uncle Moogy invited the public to join him and the Tal-Kin-Jeri dancers on a journey of cultural healing as they travelled from the Murray source to the sea.

A major component of the cultural sharing among the various language groups is the communal experience of and capture of songs and stories in language by the Ringbalin documentary makers. These short videos will be shared with the community and used as educational resources.

Additional Aboriginal land healing ceremonies have received media attention. In December 2019, the largest corroboree in 150 years was held on Yuin country at Mount Galaga in southern New South Wales. Non-indigenous allies were invited to support healing of land, country, spirit and people. An elder quoted: “The land is sick, so the people are sick.” [https://www.abc.net.au/news/2019-12-09/indigenous-australians-unite-in-historic-healing-ceremony/11781738?fbclid=IwAR2xHrcw-6adOT6BXkyNi-0UjCBdSK91mry-_2ZdKzWyIKmRj5tgftGYGvQ]. More recently (October 2020), healing ceremonies were held after the felling of a significant Djab Warrung birthing tree as part of a Victorian highway realignment project.



◆ New Dreaming Gathering 2020: deep talk with elders for healing land, waters and life. April 7-19, Aboriginal Tent Embassy, Canberra. Cancelled due to coronavirus pandemic. Watch this space.

◆ Read *Sand Talk: How Indigenous Thinking can Save the World*. Tyson Yunkaporta. 2019. This new book walks the reader through a different way of processing the word – Indigenous thinking. Aboriginal author Yunkaporta belongs to the Apalech clan of western Cape York, born in Melbourne and has lived in a dozen remote Queensland communities. He used 'sand talk' graphics (images drawn on the ground), carvings, 'yarning' (sharing stories of conversations he's had with elders and wisdom holders worldwide), new vocabulary, and his own observations to offer different approaches to addressing intractable social problems and sustainability goals. Because he is truly trying to take the reader out of well-worn perceptions and patterns of thought, he says that he had to write a different kind of book, as explained in the first chapter. It is thus slow and dense reading in places, and would be an interesting resource to read and discuss in community.

It seems impossible to take apart the ideas in this book without having read all of it. As the truism goes, you can't take pieces of Aboriginal wisdom because it stands as an integrative whole. That said, the chapters Lemonade for headaches (9) and Be like your place (12) have the most to say about connection to country and natural systems. Likewise, it is unfair and negates rich context to summarize the book's main points. The author does however, say the answers the book found in meandering through sand talk are:

What we know is determined by our obligations and relationships to people, Ancestors, land, Law and creation.

What we know is that the role of custodial species is to sustain creation, which is formed from complexity and connectedness.

The way we know this is through our cultural metaphors.

The way we work with this knowledge is by positioning, sharing and adapting our cultural metaphors.

To decide if reading Sand Talk is for you or your group, consider the following introductions.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6PZMGYPqs0Q> About Sand Talk book (1:00)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PZJlb3Pty5E> Sand talk and transmission of indigenous knowledge (19:29)

◆ Seven Phases to Integrating Loss and Grief

Local Kaurna educator and CEO of the Australian Institute for Loss and Grief, Rosemary Wanganeen developed the Seven Phases to Integrating Loss and Grief model based on lived experience. The process walks through past, present and future in the context of Aboriginal culture and healing, with emphasis on ancestors and colonisation. The following table provides an overview. The process is open to all, but is complex and nuanced. It has application to ecogrief and ecoanxiety, as evidenced in inclusion at a post-fire event mentioned earlier. In order to make certain that the tool is used appropriately, with cross-cultural reciprocity and respect, I would simply refer the reader to contact Rosemary Wanganeen. Many many indigenous wisdom holders, such as Pat McCabe (Appendix J), hold grief rituals and reader exploration is encouraged, knowing however that most should be practiced only with permission and guidance.

Table 28.2: Seven Phases to Integrating Loss and Grief

<i>Parts</i>	<i>Phases</i>
The Past	Phase Five: Identifying ancient Aboriginal and European grieving ceremonies/activities creating and maintaining Intuitive Intelligence in the highest degree. (What they had!)
	Phase Four: Identifying ancient Aboriginal and European grieving ceremonies/activities using the physical body for its expression. (What they lost!)
	Phase Three: Ancestral losses and suppressed unresolved grief being 'converted' into intergenerational suppressed unresolved grief
	Phase Two: Identifying childhood and adolescent multiple losses and suppressed unresolved grief
The Present	Phase One: Contemporary adult major grief reaction
The Future	Phase Six: Recreating Aboriginal grieving ceremonies/activities using the physical body for its expression
	Phase Seven: Maintaining Aboriginal grieving ceremonies/activities to maintain Intuitive Intelligence in the highest degree

◆ Kaurna language lessons

Jack Buckskin in Adelaide teaches the Kaurna language. He sometimes runs sessions at libraries and community centres, but he suggests the short youtube videos (8 of them) for practice once you learn the basics. Many Australians want to learn greetings and acknowledgement of country in language first.

https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=kaurna+language+lessons

The Work That Reconnects

Several of the non-indigenous ecogrief circles/workshops profiled earlier refer to the Work That Reconnects, and this resource guide also considers the WTR as a central foundation and opportunity for healing action. The WTR is a critical framework that draws on ecology, spirituality and psychology to build empowerment, creativity and resilience for transition to a sustainable world. This framework includes a spiral Theory of Change and personal practices for gratitude, honouring our pain, seeing with new and ancient eyes, and moving forward. The root teacher of The Work That Reconnects is Joanna Macy, author of *Active Hope*. Her conceptualization of The Great Turning, a time of transition, is through holding action to reduce Earth damage, a systems analysis to create alternative societal structures, and transformation of our world view and a shift in consciousness. She states:

"The central purpose of the Work that Reconnects is to help people uncover and experience their innate connections with each other and with the systemic, self-healing powers of the web of life, so that they may be enlivened and motivated to play their part in creating a sustainable civilization."

Like the Good Grief website profile earlier, the WTR resources include a global facilitator network (22 in southeast Australia), events and training opportunities, community projects and readings and resources [<https://workthatreconnects.org/>]. Adelaide now has a WTR representative; see the People and Resources table in section VI. Joanna Macy's book with Molly Brown (2014), *Coming Back to Life*, is an excellent WTR resource for the personal bookshelf. The best way to maintain contact with WTR's activities is by registering for a free online support group [<https://workthatreconnects.org/event/active-hope-ongoing-support-group/2021-02-16/>].

Process options and practices to address ecogrief and ecoanxiety

This section provides an overview of 10 categories of action for addressing ecogrief and ecoanxiety. They are offered as a starting point for building a healing program, and this rich set of offerings is broadly adaptable. The companion Appendices provide more detail on how to facilitate the exercises. Although the array of options is most outlined for group practice, some actions are relevant at the individual level as well.

- | | |
|---|------------------------|
| ♦ sharing circles | ♦ discussion circles |
| ♦ reflective nature walks and engagement activities | ♦ guided meditations |
| ♦ outdoor rituals and healing ceremonies/exercises | ♦ music |
| ♦ bodywork: 'ecoyoga' and healing dance | ♦ art |
| ♦ nature writing and poetry | ♦ spiritual traditions |

1. Sharing circles (group)

An obvious way to initiate ecogrief work is to hold sharing circles, as is common in some spiritual modalities. Facilitation of sharing circles is a learned and practiced skill, but simply

explained a sharing circle is a communal non-judgemental experience for expressing how participants feel and out-loud exploration of thoughts. The key is non-judgement in that the rest of the circle does not comment or solve the issue. Pauses and silences are ok. Some groups use cues like 'that's it' or 'I'm fully heard' to indicate thought completion. Generally there is not a time limit but guidelines outlined at the start usually comment on the importance of giving everyone time to share, if desired. Therefore instructions at the start often say let everyone share once before speaking again. Yunkaporta's book on Aboriginal storytelling also says they sit so everyone can see everyone else, with no stage or gaps, so that hierarchical barriers to consensus are removed and to ease anxiety.

I have typically seen sharing circles operate best with 8-15 participants over 60-75 minutes. However, Uncle Moogy facilitated a powerful several hour-long sharing circle – *express what feelings come up for you being here?* – at the Dupang festival with 100+ participants. The key is presence in the moment, open expression, a willingness to accept silence and emotion as a person speaks, equal status in the (literal) circle, and an intention for healing (often in unexpected ways). There was a group 'Campfire Stories' that met at The Joinery for a time under a modified sharing circle format (no judgement, but a few questions allowed). The experience was born out of musician Archie Roach's well-known comment that the world needed to spend more time around a campfire having a yarn. The monthly circles were 5-minute stories organized around a theme (e.g. joy, relationships), kept in order by gentle facilitation.

Empathy circles are illustrative, but with more formalized roles. As explained for an Extinction Rebellion event:

"Participants take varying role of Speaker, Active Listener and Silent Listener at different times. The first Speaker selects the person they will speak to (Active Listener), and then speaks about whatever comes up for them. Then the Active Listener reflects back and summarises what they are hearing until the Speaker feels heard to their satisfaction. There's no right or wrong, but The Active Listener generally refrains from asking question, analysing, detaching, diagnosing, advising or sympathizing. The Active Listener becomes the Speaker and again selects an individual, the new Active Listener. This continues for the allotted time, generally with no repeats of the Speaker/Active Listener role. Everyone else, the Silent Listeners, are paying close attention to the interaction."

An individual might use the general sharing circle strategy to journal about a topic, meaning to write freely without editing and criticism (per *The Artist's Way* classic book).

2. Discussion circles (group)

The more widely known and practiced activity is a discussion circle, characterized by back-and-forth dialogue in response to a topic, task or stimulus. As with sharing circles, effective

facilitation is critical, but in this case group guidance is in order to avoid dominance by some individuals, withdrawals, or attacks. There is a rich pool of possible prompts or ideas in order to run a discussion group: reaction to a reading, video or news event, wellbeing check-ins, or list building on a topic (e.g. self-care). An example is the Extinction Rebellion book club group in Adelaide. The important thing to note is that discussion groups are fundamentally different from sharing circles.

3. Reflective nature walks and engagement activities (group)

Adelaide is fortunate to have regular reflective nature activities organized by activists and artists Dan Havey and Melissa Hellwig. The idea of Dan's (pre-covid) walks is to explore our relationship with nature through a community supported mindfulness approach to acquainting ourselves with the "natural world". The practice is about knowing nature and ourselves, and sometimes also discovering what we do not know, in a very simple and immediately sensory way through direct experiences outdoors. The general format is to gather at a specified meeting point, a short walk to a quiet nature spot, silent observation and journaling, and group shares as desired. Questions come up like *...do we know our habitat like we know each other? how do we place ourselves in nature?* The screenshot of the Facebook page shows bimonthly events, at central and western locations.

The screenshot shows a Facebook page for a community group. The profile picture is a circular image of a sunset over water. The cover photo is a landscape of coastal vegetation. The page has a sidebar with navigation links: Home, Events (selected), Reviews, About, Photos, Posts, and Community. There is a 'Create a Page' button. The main content area shows 'Upcoming Events' (none listed) and 'Past Events' (a list of six events).

Date	Event Title	Location	Attendees
FEB 1	Nature Journaling: sharing experience, obs...	Wirranin'hi	Sat 2 PM - Daniel Havey went
JAN 29	Connect with nature: knowing Where you ar...	Semaphore Memorial Clock Adelaide	Wed 9 AM - Daniel Havey went
JAN 18	Nature Journaling: sharing experience, obs...	Wirranin'hi	Sat 2 PM - Daniel Havey went
JAN 15	Connect with nature: knowing Where you ar...	Semaphore Memorial Clock Adelaide	Wed 10:30 AM - Daniel Havey went
JAN 4	Nature Journaling: sharing experience, obs...	Wirranin'hi	Sat 2 PM - 2 friends went
DEC 11	Connect with nature: knowing Where you ar...	Semaphore Memorial Clock Adelaide	Wed 10:30 AM - Daniel was interested

Nature reflective walks can help discover what we see, hear, feel, smell and perhaps even taste in nature, and how this makes us feel. Dan further explains the process with a quote from nature writer Wendell Berry:

"Perhaps the most important lesson that nature had to teach me: that I could not learn about her in a hurry. The most important learning, that of experience, can be neither summoned nor sought out.... The thing is to be attentively present. To sit and wait is as important as to move. Patience is as valuable as industry. What is to be known is always there. When it reveals itself to you, or when you come upon it, it is by chance. The only condition is your being there and being watchful."

Consultant Melissa Hellwig created the *Naturehood, Nurturehood* Facebook page. In the About statement, she explains: "(We are)... an organization seeking to restore our relationship with nature - and one another. The group seeks to experience communication, compassion, creativity, connection AND celebration! We want to have more play and less consumption! We want to live with more spontaneity and less striving! We believe rest is a revolutionary act. We want to 'make the planet imaginative again.'" Melissa recently ran a series of daily indoor ecotherapeutic exercises (via zoom) as a way to connect people with nature at home during the covid hard lockdown in Adelaide (November 2020). 'Naturehood' mapping, an indoor bug inventory, and identifying nature relationships over a lifetime are some of the activities explored.

4. Outdoor rituals and healing ceremonies/exercises (group)

Toko-pa Turner, Canadian author of the book *Belonging: Remembering Ourselves Home* (2017), writes about the importance of ritual:


"Don't just give your gifts to people. Give relevance to the invisible by leaving offering at rivers, or sewing prayers flags for the forest. Build cairns on mountaintops, plant wildflowers in parking lots, and live your life as if it were an endless offering of beauty. Any small crumb of thanks we give to the holies makes them come alive with delight. The more we remember our invisible helpers, the more they remember us. Our days get progressively plumper with significance: the woodpecker drumming on the roof like a winged shaman reminds us how thin the veil between worlds is; the sugar maple is whispering a secret for our ears; and the friend we bump into was sent by our own longing."

These rituals can be shared and fine-tuned to run indoors or outdoors. Sunrise, sunset and the lunar cycle might be top-of-mind in terms of timeframes for creating outdoor rituals. It could be as simple as 31 consecutive days of taking a sunset photo. In engagement with traditional owners in North America dawn rituals involve bare feet touching the ground, prayers and song/drumming. The Willunga Environmental Centre has had spring equinox

celebrations on the calendar, and a special interest group plans a 2020 summer solstice ritual (by invitation). Recently a small Beltane (Gaelic) celebration of spring was held in Adelaide. The organizer explained Beltane in terms of enhancing deep connection with seasonal cycles; creating ceremony without judgement or self-criticism; diving into full self-expression with other like minds; and opening to a sense of curiosity and play. When these rituals are performed as a group, it is quite common to bring an offering to share (a feather, shell, small wooden item, token, flower, leaves) in creating an altar, and sometime to share food.

There are also more formalized group processes in practice globally that allow for open emotional expression, with their origin in the Work That Reconnects (WTR) or the Pachamama Alliance (PA): Open Sentences, The Milling Exercise (WTR & PA); visioning, and the Cairn of Mourning (WTR). Refugia Retreats in Alberta, Canada has practiced and refined many of these exercises, including an ancestor activity called 'Coming Back to Life' (pairs take role of present day and 7 generations forward). After a brief overview of each, the detailed instructions and scripts for running these lengthier healing processes can be found in the Appendices. Readers are however cautioned, that WTR and PA offer facilitator training programs, so that it is best the exercises be skilfully offered in the spirit and intent of their origin and creation.

27



JAN 28 AT 11:30 AM UTC+10:30 – JAN 28 AT 12 PM UTC+10:30

Road Forest Patch Memorial Service

Free · Online Event

Details

people going

Event by

Online Event

Jan 28 at 11:30 AM UTC+10:30 – Jan 28 at 12 PM UTC+10:30

Price: Free · Duration: 30 min

Friends

Over the last six months lost a small community of trees and a place of refuge for the birds and other life that called this place home. If you are feeling a loss, an emptiness, pained by this loss of small patch of forest on the North side of , join us for a time of remembrance where we honor their gifts and beauty. A zoom link will be shared with all guests. In lieu of flowers donations may be made to Wildwoods, Community Environmental Defense Fund or environmental organization of your choice.

Guest List

GOING

MAYBE

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Facebook © 2021

An overseas event to honour the loss of trees to development

◆ Open Sentences exercise (Appendix C / WTR)

Open Sentences is a facilitated structure for spontaneous expression as people sit and speak in pairs. One person takes a few minutes to answer an open ended sentence; temporary speaker silence is ok and there is no feedback. Then the other person does the same. An example is “A place that was magical (or wonderful) to me as a child was....”

◆ Milling exercise (Appendix D / PA)

The Milling is a silent standing and/or walking exercise to put the group in touch with two ways of being in the modern world – the emergent worldview of connectedness as it exists side by side with the all-too-familiar story of separation and isolation. It relies on body movement and eye contact, and the script is read by a facilitator that has practiced inflections and pauses. The Milling exercise should not be rushed.

◆ Visioning exercises (longer version in Appendix E / PA)

The PA’s ‘Awakening the Dreamer, Changing the Dream’ program, developed with indigenous input, assumes that a key missing element in spurring social change, is our ability to create, imagine and dream, and to stand powerfully in our vision for the future.

Visioning exercises, in general (there are many), tend to start with a silent period where, with a facilitator guide, the individual generates ideas. Then there is a period of reflection and sharing. The short version of the Pachamama visioning proceeds as follows (*italics are hints for the facilitator*):

Please settle into your chair and allow your eyes to lower or gently close, and take a breath and let it out. (*Pause*)

Please go into the future 40 or 50 years from now... and see a word that is environmentally sustainable (*Pause*)... spiritually fulfilling (*Pause*)... and socially just. (*Pause*)

Look around. What do you see? (*Pause*)

Imagine that you are guided by some of the children from the future. Let yourself be touched by the sound of their laughter and the warmth of their hands in yours, as they show you around in their world. What does an environmentally sustainable, spiritually fulfilling and socially just human presence look like? (*Long pause – 45 seconds*)

And now, take a moment to reflect --- what do you see was your contribution towards this outcome? (*Pause*)

Thank you. Please take a breath and then gently open your eyes. (*Pause*)

Typically there is a non-judgemental group share that follows, with recording of key ideas as participants speak. This is just an example of a visioning process. There are many others and the process is easily targeted and narrowed to a more specific framework.

◆ Cairn of Mourning (Appendix F / WTR)

The Cairn of Mourning is a ritualized exercise for expressing personal and communal grief from many kinds of loss – a particular natural site, trees, view, pristine setting, birdsong, a particular species. The individual wanders through the site alone in silence, selects any object that represents their grief, and then at a particular time, comes back to a circle. One-by-one participants place the item on a centre cairn being created as they share some thoughts or emotions about it (if desired), and say goodbye. There are variations of spoken and silent ways to close the ceremony, and an indoor version is also outlined in the appendix. Care should be taken not to disturb the environment or leave a lasting impact at the site.

◆ Climate Ribbon Project

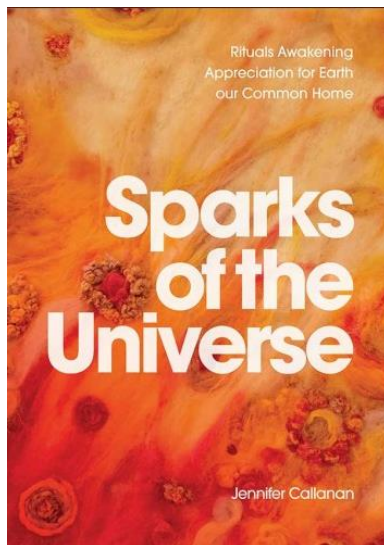
As brought to attention by the Calgary Ecogrief Circle, this global art initiative documents feelings about the world we are losing and fear to lose from climate change. In response to a targeted question, participants write their feelings on ribbons, which are then tied to a prominent tree in the community, tied to a fence, or exchanged. [www.theclimateribbon.org]

◆ Remembrance of Lost Species Day (November 30)

Started in 2011 in the UK, Remembrance of Lost Species Day has gone global in bringing activists and artists together to mourn and explore stories of extinction. The events map shows 5 previous Australian gatherings: ritual honouring the thylacine and other extinctions (Sunshine Coast), a salon of readings, discourse, performance, music and soundscapes in partnership with traditional owners (Sydney), an Anglican church service (Sydney), and Melbourne's Memorials for the Future and Greensong's eco-art exhibition and SOS Sunday Remembrance in the sacred ecology tradition. [<https://www.lostspeciesday.org/>]

◆ John Seed solar system exercise (Appendix G)

The Australian John Seed leads an exercise where he takes participants to a beach or large outdoor area. Scaled-to-size objects such as a pea, orange or a beachball represent the relative sizes of the planets in our solar system. Then the group walks off the scaled distances between the planets, which when Pluto is included, can cover more than half a kilometre from the sun to outer perimeter. The exercise is quite profound in inspiring awe and about the size of our solar system and 'nearby' galaxies, and reverence for life on Earth in vastly empty space.



◆ Adelaideian (and Pachamama alum) Jen Callanan has authored *Sparks of the Universe: Rituals Awakening Appreciation for Earth Our Common Home*, for young people in the middle primary to year 12 cohort. A sample of the adaptable rituals include Listening to Trees, Whales: Singing One Song, Celebrating the Birth of the Universe, and The World is in Need of Healing: A Prayer of Lament. The Callanan book is a companion to the adult version with over 100 environmental rituals, *Cosmic Sparks. Igniting a Re-Enchantment with the Sacred* (Margie Abbott). Both are published in Melbourne.

5. Guided meditations (group or individual)

Healing circles or workshop agendas can also include guided meditations. Whether the posture is seated or on the floor or eyes are open or closed, is not so important as stilling the mind and staying focused on the breath or as directed. The Extinction Rebellion workshop simply used a guided deep relaxation meditation. Meditation can remind us that both our pain and our power arise from our interconnectness. Also, that all things change and are impermanent. There are many meditations that will emerge with research, but here we describe 3 examples of environmental meditations that might serve as a starting point: Breathing Through (WTR), a meditation included in the book *Sand Talk*, and a Native American leader's text (Pat McCabe) for healing personal pain in the context of Mother Earth. Any of these meditations could be recorded (with acknowledgement of source) and played back for individual use.

◆ Breathing Through (Appendix H / WTR)

Breathing through the pain of environmental loss is central to Joanna Macy's book *Active Hope*. Her point is that the difficulty of activism can compound and can lead to burnout or getting stuck emotionally through pain avoidance. The Breathing Through meditation follows psychology and spiritual best practice in guiding the participant to gently confront and transform the pain, rather than running from it. The wisdom associated with meditation practices such as these is that what emerges will support rather overwhelm the practitioner.

◆ *Sand Talk* meditation (Appendix I)

Aboriginal author Yunkaporta closes the *Sand Talk* chapter 'Be Like Your Place' about connecting to land and water, with a lengthy text he has used to 'bring many people to a profound understanding of being in place. He describes further (pg. 256): "It is a dream

walk that I exhibited as a sound installation in an art exhibit called *Revealed*, in Melbourne in 2017. You might try reading it aloud to someone, or to a group of people, while they sit or lie down with their eyes closed. Afterwards we'll connect all the dots." A photocopy of the full text from the book (pages 256-265) is included in the appendix.

◆ Short excerpt from *Belonging* (Appendix J)

Pat McCabe is a Dine (Navajo) activist, artist and wisdom holder with a popular eponymous Facebook page. A recent post serves as a meditation on the intersection between personal healing and the Earth under the integrated Thriving Life system she espouses.

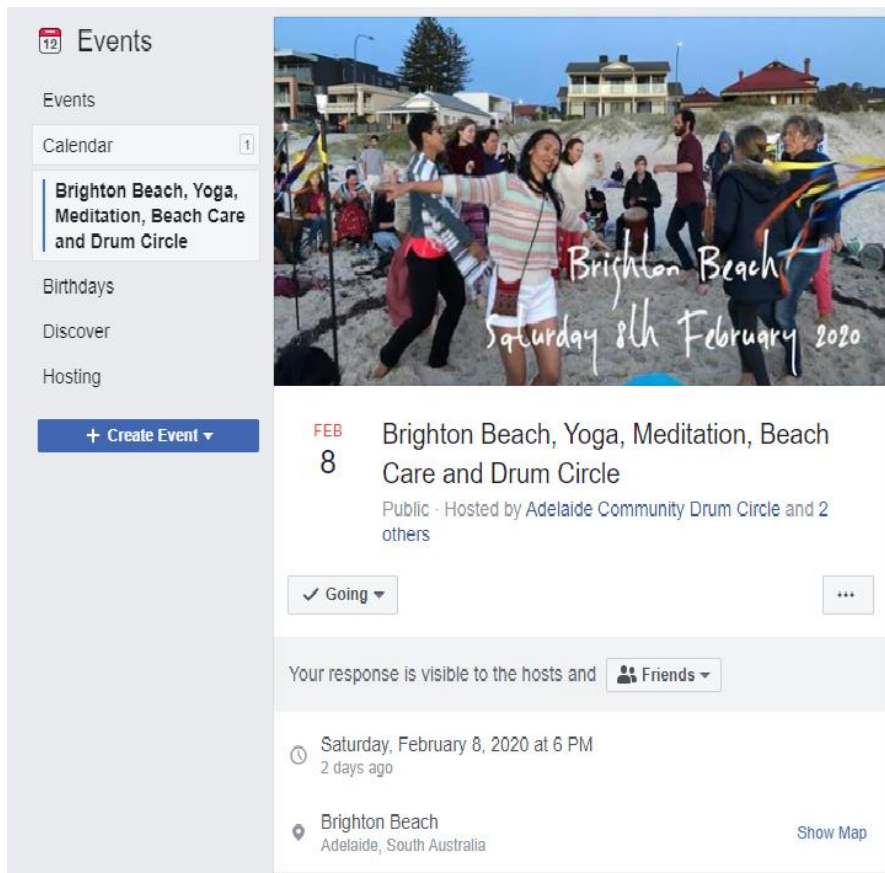
6. Bodywork: 'ecoyoga' and healing dance (group)

We know that care of the body is integral to a balanced life, and a huge body of knowledge exists about the benefits of time spent outdoors, yoga and regular exercise as lifelong practice. Here I simply want to call attention to two Adelaide initiatives that have an environmental consciousness associated with wellness practice – beach yoga events, and healing dancing.

For several years, there have been Friday or Saturday night beach yoga sessions held around Brighton, with an eco-perspective to foster self-healing, build community and strengthen an environmental connection. Typically the format is beach and ocean care/clean-up (with Sea Shepherd), beach yoga and meditation (led by Breathe in Peace), and an informal drum circle. The periodic events are family-friendly as participants come and go during the 5-11pm time slot. Organized by Adelaide Community Drum Circle, the sessions (by donation) have been growing given its welcoming vibe and inclusivity.

5 Rhythms® is a shamanic, ecstatic and meditative dance practiced worldwide, with practitioners in Adelaide. <https://www.5rhythms.com/gabrielle-roths-5rhythms/> It is an inspirational dance of deep surrender (no learned steps), spiritual prayer and collective unity. The 5 rhythms are flowing/fear, staccato/anger, chaos/sadness, lyrical/joy, and stillness/compassion performed over about an hour. Independent sessions are held for a fee, and 5Rhythms is sometimes included as part of workshop agenda, such as the Extinction Rebellion event (above).

The emphasis in these acts is to get participants out of their head and into their body and its intuitive responses. It's experimental, but the notion of human herding is being explored by theatre companies. The following article describes a Canadian-UK event linking movement and extinction where the general public is led through a series of flocking behaviours with no pre-determined outcomes. <https://www.ghostrivertheatre.com/news/herdinghumans>



7. Music (group)

Listening to music is a stellar means of relaxation and joy, particularly with the emergence of consciously engaged artists like local Barkindji musician Nancy Bates, Rising Appalachia, Nahko and Medicine for the People, Ayla Nereo, Lydia Violet, and the Dave Matthews Band. This is an incomplete list of individuals who write songs exploring their reverence for nature and calling attention to campaigns and causes, as distinct from ‘eco-rockers’ that may be known for environmentally sustainable practices on tour. The Good Grief website even has a link to a 7-hour Spotify playlist of ‘pop music with heart’

[https://open.spotify.com/playlist/2epUpPjwqmRMhy4aEf4nBk?si=Uf8OqGq TSUSL_NN2x46wWQ], including well-known and obscure artists.

But few of us have an opportunity to write a symphony about changing Arctic conditions as a Canadian musician did after visiting on-board on research vessel

[<https://theconversation.com/how-i-wrote-a-symphony-about-the-changing-canadian-arctic-89063>]. So unless you play an instrument into adult life, the active opportunities to **make** and **create** music and rhythms are more rare in comparison to passive listening. Fortunately, informal community drum and percussion circles are a permanent fixture around Adelaide, organized by artist and activist Dan Havey. In Facebook and Meetup.com promotions, he says “Bring anything that can be used to make a rhythm, wind instruments are also welcome. No experience is necessary, the focus is more on play than performance.

Sometimes it will sound fantastic, other times....interesting.” Dan brings several suitcases of quirky percussion instruments to pass around the circle if you can't find anything at home (e.g. rice in a shaker can), and uses both beautiful Parklands and Port Adelaide locations. The vibe of the largely unstructured evenings feels like ancient village gatherings, and is about building community.



Facebook drumming event

8. Art (individual and group)

Similarly, there are ecogrief healing opportunities in the creative arts to “make it” or view it. Locally there is strong leadership in expanding the awareness of nature mandalas, and in the immediate post-bushfire period to show how art can express the pain of environmental loss and connection to the natural world. In the covid era, there are also creative options for virtual galleries, such as Melbourne’s Lost Species Eco-Art Gallery, an online exhibition honouring species extinction and collective grief. <https://eco-artgallery.weebly.com/lostspeciesday.html>

◆ Nature mandalas



Source: Laviart / Natural Mandala in the woods

Tibetan mandalas are well-known in Buddhism as very detailed and meaningful sand patterns made by monks – often over a week or more - to concentrate the mind, and then they are destroyed to demonstrate impermanence. In-nature ‘paintings’ have been created by indigenous peoples for eons. The current emergence of nature mandalas would seem to draw its inspiration from both of these traditions. Melissa Hellwig, in the eastern suburbs, has developed a powerful exercise for a (largely silent) audience to create a nature mandala indoors, in the city, or elsewhere. She has an extensive collection of sustainably gathered nature items, which might include leaves, flowers, nuts, fruit, bark, seashells, and feathers. She starts the bare outline of the four cardinal directions to ground the mandala, and then participants add to it, after having learned a bit about the process and objectives from simple interpretive materials. Creation of a nature mandala is a memorable meditative exercise that can be the focus of a healing circle, part of a workshop agenda, or displayed for people to work on during event breaks.

◆ Solastalgia art exhibit

Art can also be shared in community as a means of shared emotional expression and learning. The post-bushfire Solastalgia exhibit in Lobethal is illustrative of this cooperative potential. Solastalgia is a newish concept meaning emotional or existential distress caused by environmental change or loss of a landscape home. Creator and Australian Glenn Albrecht (2012) says it originates in ‘solace’ and ‘desolation.’ The Solastalgia exhibition opening invitation, with speakers and performance, explained further:

Photos from Fabrik Arts & Heritage's post in Solastalgia exhibition opening

Solastalgia - an antidote

Opening celebration
6pm Saturday 15 February


Speakers | Joan Gibbs, Cudlee Creek resident and lecturer, School of Natural and Built Environments, UniSA and John Sandham, Collections Development Officer, Botanic Gardens SA

Performances | Belinda Broughton, (poetry) and Allegria, (choral)

Exhibition hours
16 February to 15 March 2020
Thursday to Sunday, 11am - 4pm

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“In a heart-felt response to the current environmental crisis, the Adelaide and regional artists in this exhibition explore transformative ways to mitigate the grief and disconnect associated with the passing of a once-familiar and trusted experience of ‘home’.

Weaving sound, projection, painting, textile and poetry performance, this multi-sensory exhibition is an antidote to loss, re-affirming life’s interconnectedness, and the importance of our own health and wellbeing for the work that lies ahead.”

The well-attended opening night was an immersive and heartfelt experience, from a surprise flash mob, lots of poetry, to art installations such as drawings of charcoal from a burnt house and a large nature mandala, to stirring visual images that among them referenced connectivity, new perspectives on nature and traditional custodians of the land. The exhibit was open for a month, and is illustrative of communal sharing and private discovery and reaction to recent events, for both grief expression and joy. The well-planned event demonstrated the power of art in our lives.



Solastalgia exhibit

Credit: Michael Barton

9. Nature writing and poetry (individual)

The vast body written word of course is a means of healing, both in a group and individually. It would be useful to have a collation of the best of (South) Australian nature writers as a pool around which discussion circles might be organized. That is a massive task. But in this resource guide, we want to encourage involvement of local nature-themed writers in ecogrief initiatives, especially non-professional friends, family and neighbours who write for pure joy. Sharing that work in community, and perhaps writing ourselves, can be a means of renewal and release.

10. Spiritual traditions (individual)

We often shy away from formal acknowledgement of religion and spirituality as channels for healing, in an attempt to respect all faith traditions. While practice and whether a message resonates is an endeavour unique to the individual, the formal spiritual traditions can also offer insight and practice into healing ecogrief and ecoanxiety. For example, Australian Religious Response to Climate Change is an interfaith group doing important work [<https://www.arrcc.org.au/>]. Adelaide has had climate change events, chaired by the Baha'i, to address responses to the current science and political situation from most of the major religions. These paths are often a matter of personal discovery. Here are some serendipitous connections within Buddhism and Christianity.

◆ Buddhism

Ayya Santacari, a Theravadan nun with the Buddhist Society of South Australia (Christies Beach), is sensitive to and engaged with environmental stewardship issues. She recently included the following article in her regular newsletter; it relates directly to healing a broad scope of environmental pain and activist anger, beyond bushfires.

BRINGING COMPASSION TO THE FIRES

It has been asked, how do I cope with the emotional overwhelm of this enormous fire disaster? So as Buddhists we look to the teachings to guide us.

Looking at the nature of compassion, it is the experience of wanting to help to relieve, reduce and remove suffering and pain.

The teaching on wise reflection, tells us not to dwell on those aspects of the present situation that lead to mental and emotional injury to ourselves or others. But rather to acknowledge the reality of the situation and then direct the mind towards that aspect that is beneficial and useful.

So if we dwell upon "how terrible, how terrible", whilst true, this type of thinking distresses, depresses and disempowers us.

However, if we should redirect our mind thus: yes this is truly terrible, what can I do to help?

Bringing up compassion in our hearts and minds, may this suffering be relieved.

Understanding and accepting the First Noble Truth: the world is full of suffering.

This is just the way it is. It is not some kind of cosmic error.

Rejecting reality and demanding "it shouldn't be like this!" only makes it hurt more.

So seeing the Truth of suffering, we bring up Equanimity: it is the way things are.

We bring up compassion: may I be of help to relieve this suffering.

For it is also True that we humans have great capacity to come together and relieve suffering.

I rejoice in the good hearted people fighting the fires, helping the people and helping the animals.

Let us direct our minds towards Equanimity : stuff happens!

Let us direct our minds towards Compassion: what can I do to help?

And in joining those who help we can have Gladness that there is such goodness in the world that an army of people, our people, are turning out to help.

Ayya Santacari also runs regular teaching, meditation and chanting sessions, both online and face-to-face (see the Society's website or Facebook page). There was an associated temple event to chant and bring blessings to the bushfire-affected lives of both people and animals. Members and the public were invited to pray and send wishes according to Buddhist tradition. Vattakaparitta was recited, given by The Buddha specifically that all beings may be protected from fire danger. It translates as The Quail's Protection, an ancient story about a baby quail that was made safe from the fire. While one-off, the same temple held a multi-denominational open public service for the Christchurch massacre victims a year ago. The point is that there are socially engaged religious entities that offer regular opportunities to heal grief in solidarity with a caring faith community.

Special Service to Bless Bushfire Victims

By Adelaide Sri Lanka Buddhist Vihara Chief Incumbent

Ven. Shasthrapathi Udagabbala Sumedha Thero

Date	Venue	Time
11 th January 2020	Adelaide Sri Lanka Buddhist Viharaya 8 James St, Crafers SA 5152	5.45 PM



අදිලේඩ් ශ්‍රී ලංකා බෞද්ධ විහාරය
ADELAIDE SRI LANKA BUDDHIST VIHARA

Another Buddhist resource is the new movie by followers of Zen Master Thich Nhat Hahn, ‘The Way Out,’ about the climate crisis, activism and mindfulness. The film follows two young people, a Brazilian banker and a British activist, during a stressful period in their lives. The premise is to flip the notion of ‘saving’ the earth to begin with(in) themselves. Thich Nhat Hanh has a revolutionary proposal for facing the climate crisis. “The way out is in,” he states. “The way out of climate change is inside each of us.” His invitation is to stop: to stop running and to take a good look at what is really going on. To see what views drive our behaviour, how our thought patterns and our emotions work, and why we got into trouble with the climate in the first place. In silence, we will better understand ourselves and the Earth.

The movie would be a provocative prompt for viewing and reaction in a healing circle or workshop discussion. ‘The Way Out’ can be streamed at <https://evermind.media/the-way-out/>

In late 2019, a new online course ‘Dharma in Times of Heartbreak’ was offered by Thanissara Mary Weinberg, senior Buddhist teacher and author of the book *Time to Stand Up: an Engaged Buddhist Manifesto for Our Earth*. The format is four hours of pre-recorded talks, and four hours of live, interactive student-teacher contact. The discount rate was \$108 for activists through One Earth Sangha [<https://oneearthsangha.org/events/dharma-in-times-of-heartbreak/>]. Thanissara does have a youtube presence.

There was also a four-week online course by German monk Bhikku Analayo (compatriot of Tanissara), who wrote *Mindfully Facing Climate Change*. It consists of a video talk, a guided meditation and some text material each week starting in January 2020. By donation. The four instalments and lectures are each based on one of the four noble truths: “Relating to the Earth” (1); “An Ethics of the Mind” (2); “Liberation of the Mind” (3); and “Walking the

Path" (4). The video talks, guided meditation and written support materials remain available at <https://www.buddhistinquiry.org/resources/offerings-analayo/mfcc/>

◆ Christian

Pope Francis inspiring encyclical '*Laudato Si, On Care for Our Common Home*' (2015) is the Catholic Church's most profound and comprehensive statement yet on caring for creation and the poorest. It offers a broad philosophical and practical view of how religion can be integrated with individual lifestyle and social policy. The call for a more practical Christian theology has even been taken up in academic religious circles (McCarroll 2020), with a recognition of the inadequacy of traditional pastoral care in the ecogrief arena, and a push for 'hopeless optimism' in facing reality (Robinson 2020). More practically, closer to home, rediscovery of a Catholic saint, the ecospirituality practices of a local nun, the work of Sustaining All Life, and a very active Facebook group, and are examples of direction that healing ecogrief could take in Christian circles. This resource guide relies on an engaged readership to add to awareness of healing opportunities in this arena, and others.

The recent 'trendiness' almost, of The St Hildegard of Bingen book (Durka 1991) is very useful given the standing of St Hildegard as patron saint of the arts and creativity. This 11th century abbess became famous as a Christian mystic and visionary, as well as a musical composer and writer, and her plant-based medicine is still practiced in Europe today as part of a resurgent interest. Each of the 15 short chapters is organized by a theme, some history, an excerpt from her writings, questions for reflection, companion exercises, meditation and a prayer. With chapters titled 'The greening power of justice' (5), 'God's wondrous works' (8), 'Caring for the Earth' (9) and 'Beauty and the spiritual life' (11), this small book is a rich inspirational resource for activities which an ecogrief healing circle with strong spirituality could work through.

From the Catholic tradition, Sister Kateri Duke with the Sisters of St Joseph retreat centre (Largs Bay) has an interest in ecospirituality and art. For example, she facilitates an exercise, with initial prompting from a poem, where participants draw and sketch to capture memories where Earth has nurtured their life. The US-based NGO Sustaining All Life, with representatives in 90 countries (and Adelaide), works to increase inclusivity by healing the impact of personal and societal trauma. They have produced targeted documents such as 'Catholics and Climate Change' (and another 'Jews and the Climate Emergency: Building a United Front') that could serve as a point of departure for exploring faith traditions and healing ecogrief.

Members of the Australian Christian Environmental Group Facebook page post often about how Christian scripture and faith community can help them or others through the pain of present time environmental degradation

[<https://www.facebook.com/groups/178566048829117/>] The profile says:

“Australian Christian Environmental Group is a place to discuss the connections between faith and the environment. It is for Australian Christians who care about the community of life and ecological theology, though is open to others. This group takes a broad approach to ecological concerns, discussing issues such as post-consumerism, climate change, sustainability, organic gardening, food security, social issues, poverty, resource depletion and other topics related to ecological responsibility as part of faithful Christian discipleship. This group is focused specifically on the intersection of Christian faith and ecology/climate, rather than being a general purpose green group.”

V. Transformation

We can't just continue on the same path and change action at the edges. Healing ecogrief and moving beyond it implies a radical restructuring of the way humans function on a finite planet. We need to envision it and set intentions for the shift to happen. We all have ideas in our heads about a different world and inspiration for our own unique role, but lots of big-picture thinkers have also written about it. The resource guide has referenced many seminal works and authors, but Margaret Wheatley and Charles Eisenstein are two better known visionaries who didn't fit neatly into a topic box. Management consultant and activist Margaret Wheatley [www.margaretwheatley.com] is now training warriors to defend the human spirit. Her contention is that these darkening times requires new skills. A CBC radio program [at www.cbc.ca/amp/1.5402431] elaborates on the evolution of her perspective:

“Warriors for the Human Spirit are awake human beings who have chosen not to flee. They abide. They serve as beacons of an ancient story that tells of the goodness and generosity and creativity of humanity. You can identify them by their cheerfulness. You will know them by their compassion. When asked how they do it they will tell you about discipline, dedication and the necessity of community.”

Author and changemaker Charles Eisenstein [<https://charleseisenstein.org>] also visions at this intersection between environment and spirituality and politics (although he would probably decry the warlike dichotomy of warrior-nonwarrior and other labels). He says healing means moving beyond the old paradigm of exploitation to a whole new manner of living on the earth. The indigenous perspective that ‘all beings are alive and interconnected’ is the starting point of his books *The More Beautiful World Our Hearts Know is Possible* and *Climate --- A New Story*. He has created a new film series Climate --- Inside and Out about an evolving and ancient relationship to our Earth home [<https://charleseisenstein.org/program/series/climate/>].

Margaret Wheatley and Charles Eisenstein are mentioned as a reminder that ecogrief healing can happen at the ‘small’ personal level and at the level of broader consciousness and revisioning the future. The hope is we can continue to add to these resources that spur new thinking and feeling.

Individuals participating in ecogrief work can only participate from the point of their current personal psychological status. To the extent they have addressed or are conscious of the wounds of upbringing (e.g. lack of acceptance, neglect, abuse, emotional abandonment, shame) and of society (e.g. racism, sexism, invisibility of Indigenous peoples, homophobia, ageism, classism), a more emotionally healthy, reflective rather than reactive, person joins the healing circle. The reader's attention thus directed to the work of Sustaining All Life (www.sustainingalllife.org) as a bridge to inclusive climate change campaign, and for their

multilingual resources on bringing more diversity to environmental activism. A tool they endorse is Re-Evaluation Counselling, or Co-Counselling, where paired peers share life stories in a non-judgemental atmosphere.

In a similar vein, there was a popular global 10-day online Collective Trauma Summit (October 2020) that addressed ecogrief in the context of healing trauma in individuals, communities and societies. From indigenous wisdom leaders and environmental activists, to psychologists and educators, many talks (and music performances) addressed how times of stress and change spur transformation. And that the individual wellbeing is related to the mental, emotional and spiritual health of the collective.

[<https://collectivetraumasummit.com/>]

We again want to emphasize the importance of humour and laughter, at appropriate moments, as a means of release from the freeze-fight-flight response to fear. Just the terms ecogrief and ecoanxiety are likely to evoke negative response, although facing ‘what is,’ at the right time, is necessary for healing according to psychologists. There are probably infinite possibilities to release tension and distancing, so conveners are urged to be creative in leaving spaces for games and laughter during group gatherings.

This guide draws heavily on the work of women active in ecogrief thinking and initiatives. Yet the investigations also show men as leaders at the front of ecogrief initiatives locally, nationally and globally. While the terminology of healing can, stereotypically, be very much appealing and familiar to the feminine spirit, conveners are urged to seek out a diversity of partners and shape, adapt and learn from them to send ripple effects through the awakening community.

In the end, why is healing ecogrief and ecoanxiety important? The opportunity to speak deeply from the heart about the times we live in is imperative. The shift to stewardship, compassion and love requires it. As Charles Eisenstein said:

“Reverence for all beings is the foundation of a revolution of love. Without reverence, we shuffle the cards without changing the game. Victim becomes perpetrator, perpetrator becomes victim, hate hijacks anger, punishment hijacks justice, defeat begets vengeance, and victory begets new enemies.”

VI. People and Resources

Adelaide contact information for ecohealing processes and activities

Process//activity/event	Contact	Phone	Email
Work That Reconnects	Sophie Hayat	0431 032 797	sophie.hayat@yahoo.com
Reflective nature walks; Rhythms by the River (drumming)	Dan Havey	0419 868 179	itsnotharvey@outlook.com
Nature mandalas, ecotherapy, Naturehood Nurturehood	Melissa Hellwig	0428 685 017	fmrhellwig@bigpond.com
Sustaining All Life	Nicky Page	---	nicky.page63@outlook.com
Pachamama Alliance 'Awakening the Dreamer, Changing the Dream' program	Barb Koth Josie McLean Jill Offe	0415 641 194	barbara.koth@unisa.edu.au
Gaia Grief & Gratitude (Cumberland Park grief circle)	Marisa Ala Dea	0417 145 422	marisa@aladea.net
Living Lightly with Love (Ballarat)	Liz Wade	0402 553 181	livinglightlywithlove@gmail.com
Ayya Santacari	Buddhist Society of SA	0401 080 953	ven.santacari@gmail.com
Christian eco-spirituality (Catholic)	Sister Kateri D	0418 834 114	---
Extinction Rebellion workshops	Debbie Pakes	0432 680 797	debbiepakes@protonmail.com
The Wild South workshops	Sophie or Nicky	---	wildsouth.sa@gmail.com
Solastalgia arts curator	Jo Willmot		jowilmot@inernode.on.net

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Can click on dozens of articles, plus video + poetry etc.
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VII. Appendices

- A. Other resources, including book annotations**
- B. Amy Sparks chapter, 'The authentic hypocrisy of grief'**
- C. Open sentences exercise**
- D. Milling exercise**
- E. Pachamama Alliance visioning exercise**
- F. Cairn of mourning exercise**
- G. John Seed universe and awe exercise**
- H. Breathing Through exercise**
- I. Meditation from Tyson Yunkaporta's *Sand Talk* book**
- J. Pat McCabe meditation**

Barb Koth, January 16, 2021



Plant love and watch it grow...