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## **World-Loss in Times of a Pandemic: Introducing Phenomenological Insights for Digital Mental Health Purposes**

Digital mental health services [or DMH services]. have seen a sharp spike in users since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. Lacking face-to-face access to their normal support systems, people have had to turn to digital tools to cope with new experiences of loss. With no clear end to the pandemic in sight, many of us are likely reliant upon these resources for the foreseeable future. We thus need to identify and robustly theorize the pandemic-specific ways in which mental well-being is affected and ask how this can be coped with using digital resources. In this paper I identify a specific type of loss brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic and present it as an important concept to be incorporated in DMH services. I refer to this loss as the loss of perceptual world-familiarity and I cash out its meaning using insights from the phenomenological tradition of Maurice Merleau-Ponty and Martin Heidegger. In the first instance, my project is descriptive, showing that loss of perceptual world-familiarity is a distinctive form of loss that is deeply pervasive yet easily overlooked. Towards the end of the paper I also venture into the space of the normative, offering some reasons for seeing perceptual world-familiarity as a component of well-being or living well, understood in a broadly Eudaimonian sense. I conclude the paper by highlighting several challenges as well as possibilities for coping with this form of loss using digital resources.