

The beginning of a new season - EHPS Grant Report 2022

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The EHPS Conference 2022 was my first in-person conference, where I had the opportunity to present some of my own scientific findings. The timing of its start could not have been better, as I love to learn, and the conference opened on my birthday. During the EHPS Conference 2022, I could harvest things I invested in in the past. Not only was I able to disseminate my research, but I also connected with people who had similar projects as I had, and we could exchange contacts. Through the conference I could enhance my scientific network. Between the sessions, I had several interesting talks with people I deeply respect about Open Science and other subjects. I was already able to implement some of the practical tips I was given at the Conference when I was back in Switzerland and now in Germany. I was happy to learn that there are simple things out there that I could implement by myself quickly – it gave me the feeling that I can contribute to promote Open Science. I learned other practical things at the Conference. I visited for example the workshop „The challenge of teaching health psychology in medical school.“ This workshop was a lot of fun and I received some great teaching tools that I already adapted for my context.

Further, it was during the conference that I received the news of a job confirmation at the Institute of Medical Psychology in Heidelberg, Germany. Beginning in October in Germany I would:

1. be paid to work at the Institute, and

2. be further supervised to finish my already progressed Ph.D. as planned.

In the months before the EHPS Conference, I felt like being in a state of limbo. The reason for this was that a couple of months before, I had to resign my well paid and more than half-progressed Ph.D. position, although I desperately wanted to finish my Ph.D. For this reason, I was looking for clarification on whether, how, and where my Ph.D. would continue. Therefore, I connected with several Professors from my field to see if they had:

1. possibilities to hire me, and
2. would be able to supervise my Ph.D. further.

As you might imagine, I endured much tension in the weeks before the EHPS. The days of the EHPS felt like a huge sigh of relief for me and left me very grateful because I could present my research despite not knowing if I would be able to do science in the future. My very first learning at the EHPS Conference was that other researchers also struggle. To hear and learn this in my particular situation was very helpful. Writing this Grant report down, it reminds me of Kristen Neff's „common humanity“ component of self-compassion (Neff, 2003). The EHPS in 2022 was a time and place for me to learn to be more vulnerable and honest, even in the professional field of science. I also felt rewarded for having the opportunity to be at the conference because it had cost me a lot to sign up for the travel grant, as I had such an uncertain future working situation during the sign-up process. Receiving the EHPS grant was very rewarding and encouraging in a difficult time. It was one of the few things that kept me going in my scientific career and strengthened my self-

efficacy at that time. I learned that I hold power and that I am not entirely dependent on the uncertainties I experienced regarding my working situation.

In summary, the EHPS Conference grant made it possible for me as a – at that time – unclear affiliated early career researcher – to participate at the EHPS Conference and present my very first scientific findings. The grant enabled me to learn more about Open Science through targeted small talks between the sessions. Further, I received new ideas for my teaching responsibilities. But – and I think that is much more important – it also gave me opportunities to exchange with people who have had their struggles regarding some aspects of their professional careers. These exchanges shaped me personally as I realized I was not the only one in this kind of situation. It helped me decide to be more vulnerable about my experiences from now on. For me, the time point of the EHPS Conference marked the end of a difficult season and heralded a new season. It was a reward for the difficult decision to signing up when many things about my career were unclear. I am very thankful that I received this grant. It might just have been a small thing for the European Health Psychology Society, but it was an encouraging thing for me. It was one of the few things that kept me going. Thank you to all that made this possible and to all the special people I met at the conference.

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