

# European Health Psychology Society (EHPS) Conference Report by Lise-Marie Nassen

**Lise-Marie Nassen** I had the privilege of attending the 2023 European Health Psychology Society (EHPS) Conference in Bremen, Germany, through the EHPS Conference Grant, an experience that exceeded my already high expectations and proved to be an invaluable opportunity for

interdisciplinary academic enrichment and networking. As a PhD candidate in communication sciences, I did not know what to expect from the conference, and I must say, I was a bit scared of possibly feeling like an outsider. Therefore, the beginning of the conference was pretty thrilling to me, as I was going there by myself, not really knowing if I would be able to connect with others.

Very quickly I found out that my worries were groundless, as the EHPS conference offered a very welcoming environment and with the wide array of interesting sessions offered, I immediately recognized this conference as a place where I could thrive. The diverse array of research topics presented allowed me to explore my research interests from a new perspective. In my own PhD project, I focus on digital disconnection strategies from the smartphone and social media and the implications of using these strategies on well-being. At EHPS, I was able to attend many presentations that looked at the issues of overuse and disconnection from mobile media and devices from a psychological perspective. For me, learning from these psychological standpoints was an invaluable extension of my theoretical and methodological knowledge in the field of disconnection research, that I believe will have a

significant impact on the trajectory of my ongoing research.

I remember presenting my own work in the symposium 'Smartphone use in daily life: Do we have to worry about our health?', organized by Dr's Theda Radtke and Jan Keller, as a nice academic milestone and I was happy to be part of this exquisite session on my topic of research. On a fun note, it was also the presentation in front of the largest audience that I have done to date.

One of the highlights of the conference were the enlightening sessions on digital tools and mental health, e-health and (digital) behavior change interventions. Being exposed to these various research methodologies and the presentations on innovative and original interventions left me thoroughly inspired. Witnessing the breadth of possibilities in setting up tools and interventions expanded my view on the potential of developing my own disconnection intervention study in the future. I perceive this as an important outcome from EHPS, as I now am convinced that research on disconnection and well-being is a very fitting topic to conduct intervention studies on, which is a takeaway lesson I think I would not have realized without attending this conference in health psychology.

Beyond the academic insights gained, the EHPS conference served as a catalyst for future interdisciplinary collaborations. Networking with esteemed scholars who share a common interest in smartphone and social media overuse, digital disconnection strategies and mental health and well-being research was made easy and enjoyable at EHPS. The pleasant coffee breaks and lunch opportunities surely helped with this. This

networking laid the groundwork for me for potential collaborations on future research projects. This prospect is a remarkable outcome of the conference, significantly impacting both my PhD project and further academic trajectory.

The networking experience during the day was not only professionally enriching but also extended into delightful conference memories in the evening. I had the opportunity to attend a dinner with multiple colleague presenters, which helped form connections in a more informal way, and EHPS also offered fun evening activities. Also, exploring the charming city of Bremen under the city lights added an extra layer of enjoyment to the overall experience, allowing me to appreciate the cultural and historical richness that the city offers. The combination of daytime professional interactions and evening social engagements made the conference a memorable experience and highlighted the value of attending in-person conferences to me once again.

Returning to Belgium, I carried with me a newfound inspiration and I was very satisfied to have been a part of the EHPS conference. The inclusive and friendly atmosphere of the EHPS community helped me to shape immediate connections with fellow researchers, even for someone attending the conference without prior acquaintances. The conference provided a supportive environment for learning, networking, and idea generation, resulting in a notebook brimming with innovative research ideas, concepts and perspectives.

In conclusion, I express my gratitude to EHPS for offering me this enriching opportunity. The EHPS conference has undeniably played an important role in broadening my horizons, deepening my interdisciplinary understanding of my research domain, and fostering connections that have the potential to shape my academic journey. I look forward to the prospect of further contributing to the EHPS community and incorporating the insights gained into my ongoing

and future research endeavours.



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