

EHPS Conference Grant Report

Sabryna Sas

*Griffith University,
Australia*

EHPS 2023, what an amazing experience.

Starting my PhD during the month that Covid-19 hit Australia, I felt greatly impacted and limited in my PhD experiences. Not only was my research with Australian prisoners severely delayed, my experience as a PhD student was also impacted. In-person activities were put on hold, my university campus was shut down, access to the shared PhD office was limited, and conferences were all shifted online. I had friends who graduated from their PhD's in 2019 who had described amazing experiences travelling to various countries and cities to attend conferences and seminars, and the prospect of not having these experiences was disheartening. As restrictions began to ease and we learnt to live with Covid-19, the likelihood of international travel was increasing. Enter EHPS 2023 - my first international conference and my first in-person oral presentation; an experience I will never forget.

As a PhD student who is not supported by a scholarship at Griffith University in Brisbane, Australia, international conferences in Europe can be challenging to attend. Not only does travel take over 22 hours one-way, but expenses can be exorbitant. This is why I am extremely grateful to have been awarded the EHPS 2023 conference grant. This grant helped me enormously with supporting my attendance. Without this grant, my attendance at EHPS 2023 was improbable.

The conference itself was a very well organised event. Because I had never been to an international conference, I did not know what to expect. I was hesitant in my approach, but very

quickly felt welcomed and included as an EHPS member. The variety of topics and presentation formats catered to all attendees. As a first timer, it was eye-opening to see such a large group of health psychologists who were all passionate about the same things and who were so excited to share their work.

Along with being accepted to present an oral presentation at EHPS, I also had the privilege to attend and participate in the pre-conference CREATE workshop titled 'Communicating health psychology research to lay audiences'. Delivered by Dr Laura Konig and Dr Heide Busse, this workshop was definitely not one to miss. This 3-day workshop was an excellent introduction into the world of EHPS. It gave me the opportunity to network with a variety of people from all around the world, many of whom I can now call life-long friends. Attending CREATE before the EHPS conference officially started really helped to reduce my anxiety around the conference. The topic for the CREATE workshop was also extremely relevant to my research. My research focuses on the broader self-control space. More specifically, one of my PhD projects involves interviews with current prisoners in Australian prisons, and investigates their experiences in prison and how the environment and other factors impact their self-control. This research has wide-reaching implications. These include impacts on individuals, families, communities, and has significance for government and political bodies. Thus, CREATE has been an invaluable experience in building my skills in communicating my research to lay audiences and those in relevant industries. For those outside of research, such as Queensland Corrective Services

and private prison companies, it can be difficult to understand the results of psychological research. Given the importance of my research and the confidential nature of this specific population, I now believe that I have the knowledge and practical experience to produce effective scientific communication and dissemination with all stakeholders. Without the conference grant, I would not have been able to participate in the CREATE workshop and gain this vital experience.

More broadly, attending EHPS with the support of the grant has enabled me to form a variety of networks that will have a positive impact on my research and career. There were so many inspiring presentations, delivered by energetic and passionate researchers. All presenters and attendees were always eager to have a chat about research ideas and future collaborations. Prior to the conference, I had hit a motivational wall with my PhD, however, I left the conference feeling inspired to continue pushing ahead and excited about the next stage of my PhD and career as an academic.

I would like to give a huge thank you to the EHPS Grants Committee for this great opportunity, and extend this to the CREATE workshop facilitators, the CREATE executive committee, all presenters and attendees of the conference, and everyone who was involved in the organisation of EHPS 2023. I hope to see many of you again in Portugal!



Sabryna Vasilika Sas

School of Applied Psychology, Griffith University, Queensland, Australia

sabryna.sas@griffithuni.edu.au