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Health Psychologist**

Bulletin of the European Health Psychology Society

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# EHP Profiles 2018

## Vera Araujo-Soares (Portugal/UK)

*President*



I am a Senior Lecturer in Health Psychology in the Faculty of Medical Sciences, Newcastle University, UK. An EHPS member since 1997, I attended 17 EHPS conferences, served on two previous ECs, was as a member of CREATE and Synergy organizing committees for 5 years and was an editor of the EHP. My research focuses on the

development and evaluation of complex interventions for the promotion of health behaviours, prevention and self-management of chronic conditions. I am passionate about translating theory and empirical evidence into practice and by doing so, refining theory.

I am very honoured to be the President of this Society that has contributed so much for my training. My priorities for the next two years are to;

1. contribute to further improve our communication with our members (it is becoming easier to read the emails sent by the society);
2. professionalise the processes designed to facilitate the management of this society and its webpage
3. increase opportunities for research and collaboration between our members;
4. invest in legacy events;
5. support the work of our UN subcommittee in order to understand how to influence policy and support the UN in the complex implementation process of its SDG's for the health of the population and the planet.

I am very fortunate to have such a great team in this EC and also an active membership with outstanding expertise and engagement across Europe. I aim to draw on the expertise of our members and fellows to make sure that we progress towards these goals: together we are strong and can promote change.

There is one final thing that we would like to embark on: mapping the history thus far of the EHPS and adding to this the potential impact of this Society.

## Evangelos (Vangelis) Karademas

*President Elect*



I am a Professor in Clinical Health Psychology at the Department of Psychology, University of Crete, Greece. For more than a decade, I served as the Head of the Counselling Center for Students at the University of Crete. In addition, I served as Head of the Department of Psychology, University of Crete for two years. I currently collaborate with the University of Crete Medical School, and the Faculty of Nursing and the Dental School at the University of Athens, and I am actively involved in the activities of local associations for the support of patients suffering from cancer. I have been a member of the European Health Psychology Society since 2002 and I was the Greek National Delegate for several years (2004 – 2010). Also, I have helped

in the organization of seven EHPS conferences as a Scientific Program Track Chair or as a member of the Scientific Committee, and I was the Chair of the Organizing Committee and President of the 25th EHPS Conference in Crete. For the last two years, I served as a co-opted member of the EHPS Executive Committee (National Delegate Officer). This year, I was elected an Honorary Fellow of the Society. My research interests include patient adaptation to chronic illness, the role of stress and related factors in health and illness, individual differences in health, self-regulation and dyadic regulation. Currently, I am a member of the editorial board in seven international journals and an Assoc. Editor of Translational Behavior Medicine. As President-Elect, I plan to focus on the strengthening of the international impact of the EHPS, as well as on the enhancement of the collaboration with local national health psychology societies/organizations.

### **Karen Morgan (Ireland)**

*Past President*



I am the Deputy Dean and Foundation Lead in Psychology and Behavioral Science at Perdana University, Royal

College of Surgeons in Ireland School of Medicine in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. I have been here on secondment from the Division of Population Health Sciences, RCSI Dublin since 2011.

My research focuses include ageing, quality of life and sexual health. Since moving to Malaysia, I have become increasingly involved in studies of how culture influences health and health behaviour. Health psychology is very much in its infancy in Malaysia but the potential for growth is significant. A member of EHPS since 2004, in the past I have been the local liaison for CREATE, Chair of CREATE, Chair of

Synergy and Secretary of EHPS. I was very proud to serve as President of EHPS from 2016-2018. As Past President on the committee I will be working closely with Easy Conferences and the conference teams for 2019 and 2020. I also hope to become more involved in the growing group of EHPS members involved in developing and facilitating research activities in low and middle income countries.

### **Benjamin Schüz (Germany)**

*Secretary*



I am a professor of Public Health at the University of Bremen in Germany. Before coming to Bremen in 2017, I have worked at

the School of Medicine (Division of Psychology) at the University of Tasmania, Australia and the German Centre of Gerontology.

My research focuses on understanding socioeconomic differences in health-related behaviours, and how to address these through evidence-based interventions.

The EHPS has been good to me – I have profited from the workshops, the networks created through the workshops and the international perspectives on Health Psychology since my first conference in 2004. Throughout my research training and post-doc phase, I have served on the boards of CREATE and SYNERGY in varying roles.

In my role, I hope to be able to give back to the society after having profited from it throughout the years. I want to support the society in growing, in continuing to provide a platform for sharing research excellence, in fostering early-career researchers, and in providing a Health Psychology perspective on the challenges our health systems face.

## Gudrun Sproesser (Germany)

*Treasurer*



I am a postdoctoral researcher in the Psychological Assessment and Health Psychology group at the University of Konstanz, Germany. My research focuses on the multiple dimensions of both eating behavior as well as of the reasons why people eat what they eat. Also, I'm interested in the dynamics of health behavior and compensatory patterns. Currently, I am working on an international project targeting the question what constitutes traditional and modern eating in ten different countries.

I am an EHPS member since 2008 and intensified my EHPS activities as a member of the CREATE organizing committee from 2009 until 2013. Since 2014, I am treasurer of the EHPS and always enjoyed taking part in the fantastic work of the Society. I am glad to have the opportunity to serve for another two years.

## Marta Marques (Portugal)

*Membership Officer*



I am a Marie Sklodowska-Curie Research Fellow at Trinity College Dublin, and Honorary Research Associate at University College of London.

I obtained my Ph.D. in Health Psychology from Leiden University, and I am a chartered clinical and health psychologist. My research focuses on motivational and self-regulation processes underlying health behavior change and maintenance, and developing and testing theory-based health digital behavior change interventions.

Since I joined the EHPS in 2009, I have

participated in most of the annual conferences and various workshops/expert meetings. In recent years I have been involved in various activities of society, which provided me valuable experience that I can use to enhance EHPS reach and initiatives. I was associate editor of the *European Health Psychologist*, chair of the E-courses Committee, and member of the UN Committee Group. In August 2016, I joined the EC, taking the role of Membership Officer. As membership officer, I am responsible for promoting recruitment of new members, and for maintaining good membership records.

## Val Morrison (UK)

*Grants Officer*



With 30 years of research experience since the late 1980's (before 'health psychology' had emerged in the UK) I am a latecomer to the EC although I've been a member of the EHPS since 1994! Working with academic and NHS colleagues to address functional and emotional outcomes in patients and carers living with varied health conditions, we use mixed methods in prospective designs, or within randomised controlled trials. A key focus is developing and delivering multidisciplinary, health psychology informed interventions (e.g FEMUR trial; SLA Social & Leisure Activities after stroke trial; TOPCAT-G optimising follow-up in gynecological cancers). Receiving the 2014 EHPS Network grant with fantastic colleagues in the Netherlands, Israel, USA, Poland, Singapore and Greece, culminated in the book *Caregiving in Context*, Palgrave 2015. Following up on some aspects of this led some of us to recently capture a Marie Curie Slodowska International Training

Network Grant -and so from 2019 we will have 15 new PhD students investigating caregiving motivations and interventions across many countries. These students and their supervisors will no doubt attend future EHPS meetings and keep caregiving issues on the agenda.

As well as through research I try to 'give back' to my discipline through my textbook, *Introduction to Health Psychology* (Morrison & Bennett, 2006/09/12/16 and soon, 2020!). This widely used core text for health psychology and medical students helps me bring to the EHPS EC a breadth of understanding of the potential of Health Psychology research and training across Europe.

### **Sabrina Cipolletta (Italy)**

*National Delegate Officer*



I am a professor at the Department of General Psychology of the University of Padova, Italy. Here, I teach the social psychology of health and lead a laboratory for research and intervention in health psychology, called Psymed. My research targets illness experience and caregiving, but also online communication and support in health psychology, mainly within a constructivist perspective. I am also a psychotherapist and I strongly believe that research and practice reciprocally feed each other. My commitment in the interdisciplinary cooperation led me to be part of the Human Inspired Technology Research Centre and to be one of the funders of the Italian Association of Systems Medicine. As delegate for the internationalization of my Department, I am committed to promoting international collaborations.

My first EHPS conference was in 2009 and since then I have been attending conferences almost

every year. This allowed me to taste the vibrant and democratic atmosphere of the association and I finally entered in its very core by organizing 2017 EHPS conference in Padova. I also served as a member of Synergy committee.

As National Delegate Officer I would like to promote the dissemination of health psychology and the networking among different countries. I also would like to construe new links between different scientific societies in order to extend EHPS borders and contribute to construe a more comprehensive approach to health psychology.

### **Sharon Cahill (Ireland)**

*Administrator*



I'm Sharon, the EHPS Administrator, a position I've been in for the past 5 years. I am originally from Ireland, and now living in Beijing with my family.

I qualified from university with a business management degree and worked in hotel management for several years. I have also worked with major international Insurance companies performing Company Secretarial duties and supporting directors at board level and company board meetings.

My duties at EHPS include administrating to all the various tasks of the society and supporting the members of the Executive Committee. My job is varied and interesting and I'm always available to assist in any way I can. I enjoy being part of the EHPS team!



# Interview with Merry Bullock, Secretary General for the International Council of Psychologists

June 2018

## Efrat Neter

*Ruppin Academic Center,  
Israel*

## Vera Araujo Soares

*Newcastle University,  
Institute of Health &  
Society, UK*

Merry lived in several countries (U.S., Canada, Germany, and Estonia) and worked in various universities, a research institution (Max Planck Institute in Munich, Germany), and for

professional associations (APA, head of International office) and policy/funding organizations (e.g., Estonian Academy of Sciences, National Science Foundation (US)). Her work spanned teaching, research, program development, and policy advice in social and behavioral sciences and science in general, in national organization and international organizations.

## Where has psychology managed to make a difference, that is, affected international public policy?

There are some good instances where Psychology has made a difference in how we think about issues or how we address them. Some that come to mind with health implications are:

1. Disaster management/response now includes mental health and psycho-social elements included among WHO guidelines (see [http://www.who.int/mental\\_health/emergencies/IASC\\_MHPSS\\_M\\_E\\_30.03.2017.pdf?ua=1](http://www.who.int/mental_health/emergencies/IASC_MHPSS_M_E_30.03.2017.pdf?ua=1); [http://www.who.int/mental\\_health/publications/guide\\_field\\_workers/en/](http://www.who.int/mental_health/publications/guide_field_workers/en/)) that cover issues from

Psychological First Aid to longer term recovery and resilience. The gradual inclusion of psycho-social elements evolved over several decades, with major events such as the Tsunami in Asia having a large effect.

2. One important change in the revision of the International Classification of Diseases (ICD) was to pay attention to the behavior of medical practitioners in applying health classification codes – or the “clinical utility.” Along with others, psychologists have been very involved in testing how the revised codes work in practice (field trials) to maximize diagnostic utility. The International Union of Psychological Science (the accredited international organization in psychology to WHO) has helped to foster the impact of psychological science to this process. The revision process for mental health and substance abuse chapter has been led by a psychologist.

3. Gender and sex identity - Psychological knowledge and psychology's stance with the LGBTQI (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex) community gradually affected other scientific associations and societies so that all or most include 'sex and gender identity' as a characteristic on which scientists should be protected. This has been a ten year process of bringing psychological/behavioral perspectives into the administration and proceedings of most scientific organizations. It started with the APA's office of gender identity which initiated raising LGBT issues around the world and culminated with overall acceptance in most global scientific organizations.

4. Psychological contributions in the prevention and treatment to HIV/AIDS. From the beginning of the epidemic it became obvious that the prevention and treatment (issues such as stigma, gender roles, and adherence) should also be guided by behavioral and not only medical knowledge. The programs became very soon multi-disciplinary and inter-professional training evolved.

## Could you identify international bodies we (an NGO in the health domain) would want to influence?

- The WHO in Geneva and Vienna.
- The International Council for Science. There is an urban health initiative worth exploring – see <https://council.science/what-we-do/research-programmes/thematic-organizations/urban-health-wellbeing>
- The United Nations. There is a coalition of psychology organizations at the UN headquarters in New York (see PCUN- <https://psychologycoalitionun.org/>)

## How can we - a small NGO - access the international bodies and attempt to influence their policies? What would be potential effective strategies of influence?

1. Identify multiple stakeholders, possible **partnerships, build coalitions**. Finding partners is important for impact. For example, the International Union of Psychological Sciences (IUPsyS), of which EHPA is an affiliate organization, has formal relations with WHO and the UN.

EHPA (the European Federation of Psychological Associations), is also connected with the WHO; Others include health related organizations in

other countries, such as the APA Division 38; Society of Behavioral Medicine.

Other directions are multi-level government organizations, e.g., the EU, or international foundations, such as the Gates foundation.

2. Frame and address **psychology's role through our impact on challenges important to the citizenry**. It is important to illustrate to decision makers that we have ways of addressing the problems of their constituents. It is therefore important to identify the priorities of decision makers and the problems/issues with which their audiences grapple. The focus should be on the problems of the people and how psychology can contribute rather than issues in psychology (legislation, training, jobs). A good example of successful advocacy in this model was the activity of the Norwegian Psych Association who teamed up with the medical establishment in forging lobbying and legislation in addressing health problems of the public.

3. Demonstrate the **effectiveness of programs in terms of outcome and economics**. A good example of this was the demonstration that incorporating behavioral techniques for pre-mature babies (e.g. handling and other psychosocial considerations) led to better outcomes, shortened hospital time and saved money.

## What do you think are key priorities at this moment? Priorities for knowledge and action?

### Knowledge priorities

1) Incorporating public health perspectives into our research and theories. For psychology to have an impact, we need to provide information that



decision makers find necessary for their choices – information on scalability of health interventions, cost, and feasibility, for example.

2) What are the problems decision makers need to solve? We need to incorporate psychological indicators/words into the outcomes of decision makers.

## Action priorities

1) Diversity & health, and cultural competency in healthcare to diverse populations.

a. At a policy level it addresses training of the workforce, licensing, and regulating.

b. Building Mental Health systems in countries that do not have them. How to teach, regulate, involve para-professionals in order to provide services to needy populations.

2) Immigration, migration and displacement – growing preoccupation in many countries, both developed and developing countries.

3) Gerontology.

4) Chronic diseases. Exercise.

## Do you know of any opportunities for international funding applications?

The big foundations – Gates, Rockefeller, MacArthur, have large scale health programs. We, as psychology, need to tell them a compelling science-to-practice story. Still, we should not overlook smaller organizations that can connect behavioral science researchers and on-the-ground NGOs.

As part of our efforts to disseminate our science and inform policy and practice and by this increasing the potential for impact we now actively participate in the Psychology Coalition of the United Nations monthly meetings. We have also initiated efforts to strengthen our ties with EFPA

(European Federation of Psychology Associations) given their active role with the UN World Health Organization (WHO). With this we hope to increase the visibility of our scientific field of Health Psychology and our society.

As a society we will start asking those submitting abstracts for our well attended conferences (around 1000 conference attendees a year) to select where their work fits considering the UN Sustainable Development Goals. We are also pondering on how to increase the possibilities for dissemination, impact and legacy in each of the countries where we organise our yearly conferences by engaging local policy, practice and community partners. We are currently reconsidering the grants offered by our society and plan to consider offering a grant that will aim at supporting the development of impact cases. Making the case for the contributions our scientific field can bring to practice is part of our goals.



**Efrat Neter**

Behavioral Sciences Department,  
Ruppin Academic Center, Emeq  
Hefer, Israel

[neter@ruppin.ac.il](mailto:neter@ruppin.ac.il)



**Vera Araujo Soares**

Newcastle University, Institute of  
Health & Society, UK

[vera.araujo-soares@newcastle.ac.uk](mailto:vera.araujo-soares@newcastle.ac.uk)

# The 11th Annual Psychology Day at the United Nations: Climate Change, Psychological Interventions, and Promoting Mitigation and Adaptation.

**Sarah Goodman**  
*Icahn School of Medicine  
at Mount Sinai*

On April 12th 2018, the United Nations held its 11th annual Psychology Day, an event where esteemed psychological scientists describe how expert knowledge from their profession can facilitate and expedite global change and well-being in service of the Sustainable Development Goals. Non-governmental psychology organizations accredited by the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) help sponsor Psychology Day, particularly the European Health Psychology Society (EHPS), the American Psychological Association (APA), and the Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology (SIOP). This year's event was also primarily co-sponsored by the Permanent Missions of Palau and the Dominican Republic.

For this year's theme, *Climate Change: Psychological Interventions, Promoting Mitigation and Adaptation*, speakers addressed the relevant sociobehavioral theories and interventions targeting climate change itself, as well as its negative effects on the human condition. During her introduction, clinical psychologist Dr. Leslie Popoff, PhD, this year's event chair, emphasized that "the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was drafted by representatives from all regions of the world and adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1948, for the first time establishing fundamental human rights to protect all people of all nations. Included in this declaration is the human right to benefit from science and technology," which must

be fulfilled to the greatest extent possible to achieve Sustainable Development Goal 13: Climate Action. Humanity can only take sufficient action against climate change via extensive scientific and technological advancement, and if left unaddressed, Dr. Popoff said, "climate change will exacerbate current health crises, particularly [that of] vector-borne diseases, which account for one sixth of all deaths worldwide." Although not mentioned at this particular event, the most recent report from the United Nations' Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), released in October of 2018, warns of global environmental catastrophe by 2030 - in 12 years - if global temperatures increase beyond 1.5 degrees Celsius above normal. Urgent, unprecedented changes are thus needed to prevent irreversible damage to the earth's ecology and the subsequent societal deterioration. "There is nothing opaque about this new data," said Christiana Figueres, the former UN Climate Chief who led the historic Paris Agreement of 2015. "The illustrations of mounting impacts, the fast-approaching and irreversible tipping points are visceral versions of a future that no policy-maker could wish to usher in or be responsible for."

Most relevantly and importantly, Dr. Popoff then elaborated, "Climate change is as much a psychological and social phenomenon as [it is] a matter of science. Human behavior is central to energy use and environmental preservation. Psychological research has provided insights into the connections between values, beliefs, norms, behaviors, and strategies that can make a

difference in promoting a more sustainable environment." Since the current climate change crisis is entirely due to human activities such as rapid deforestation and the perpetual burning of fossil fuels, behavioral and organizational change strategies are instrumental to curtailing and altogether halting environmental degradation, pollution, wildlife endangerment, and the like.

Next to provide this event's opening remarks was Her Excellency Olai Uludong, ambassador to the Permanent Mission of Palau. Prior to her current diplomatic post, Uludong was the Climate Change Advisor for Environmental Policy and Management throughout Micronesia and the Pacific region. Indeed, she was the lead negotiator for the Alliance of Small Island States on the United Nations' Framework Convention on Climate Change from 2012 through 2014. According to Uludong, "In many ways, human psychology is at the root of the climate change crisis. Why do human beings continue to engage in polluting activities when the consequences are so grave, and solutions are so abundant?" Unfortunately, human beings are not as rational as we would like to believe, and instances of driving a gasoline-powered car or consuming an animal product, which are seemingly inconsequential at the individual level, relentlessly culminate billion-fold into the major culprits of environmental destruction. "Beyond swaying the skeptics," we must therefore examine what emergency climate action and mobilization should entail. Rather than processing its effects over the course of decades, we must learn to view and react to climate change as a swiftly mounting, present-oriented threat, given that carbon dioxide emissions have risen to 2.4 billion pounds per *second* worldwide. Uludong then stressed the importance of building strong public health systems throughout each nation to provide a decent measure of security to everyone in the wake of rising sea levels, destroyed homes, lost livelihoods, and threatened food sources as well as illnesses. Since public health agencies alone cannot

bear such weight during this new, dangerous "Anthropocene" era of natural history, "our success will invariably rest on the resilience of our communities," whose members must prioritize cooperation over competition. "Such is the bed we have made for ourselves."

The first expert guest speaker to present was Dr. Susan Clayton, PhD of the College of Wooster, whose research focuses on humans' relationships and interactions with animals. Her presentation, *The Role of Psychology in Responding to Climate Change*, overviewed different psychological theories that can be used to explain and respond to global environmental catastrophe. After emphasizing the steep linear increase in average global temperatures and frequency of natural disasters over the past 40 years, she transitioned into the relevant importance of psychology. Although 60 percent of US citizens surveyed do express significant awareness of and concern over climate change and its effects, their level of concern is not tantamount to the objective severity of the problem. This is due to a wide variety of often culturally dependent cognitive and emotional functions. Of the 3 major psychological aspects of climate change, the first is human understanding, which is largely in the realm of perception and fully processing its nature and effects. Although collective concern worldwide has increased and more people are uniting to take action, psychologists must continue to address how people perceive climate change, such that their concern prompts adequate, productive responses. They must also overcome cognitive barriers to understanding, such as filling knowledge gaps and realizing the issues' personal relevance despite their geographic distance from immediately affected regions. Emotional barriers to understanding include fear and denial, as well as attachment to the belief that "our current system is good" and will continue to work in our favor. Lastly, ideological barriers include rejection of information contradictory to existing beliefs, particularly those pertaining to religion,

technology, and economics. For instance, members of the conservative and religious Amish group believe that human behavior is inconsequential at the existential level, and that only God has control over the natural environment (this would make sense, given their rustic, electricity-free operations and relative isolation from the rest of American society). Others in more mainstream, modern settings often believe that there is no pressing need to change their habits, as they anticipate that “technology will save us,” i.e. that up-and-coming scientific advancements will ultimately solve the problem.

Indeed, factors limiting acceptance of (and subsequent action against) climate change include adherence to cultural and social norms, particularly “norms of collective ignorance.” This unique term refers to the widespread ignorance or denial that is uniformly popular throughout a given community, often for culturally relevant reasons. Clayton mentioned the uniquely American norm of ignoring climate change, which is largely related to the pervasive commitment to and faith in free-market capitalism. This is in spite of its insidious and exploitative qualities, which are nonetheless routinely justified and rationalized. Climate change denial usually accompanies adherence to capitalistic ideologies, along with the notion that environmental concerns are “feminine” and indicate emotional weakness. To maintain their platforms and personas (and retain powerful political affiliates), certain political groups also tend to ignore climate change due to their membership criteria, as with right-wing republicanism. For these reasons, convincing people to change via sheer facts and statistics remains ineffective, especially given the widespread, high levels of mistrust in the media and “fake news” outlets. Clayton emphasized that anecdotal accounts and tangible evidence are much more potent, as are direct appeals to people’s personal investment in the issue. The benefits of taking action will vary depending on people’s

group membership, geographic location, and cultural background, so it is of particular importance to gear persuasive efforts towards the specific audience being addressed at a given time. Although more research must be done on the *exact* kinds of effects climate change has on humanity, it is already abundantly clear that we are victims of our own creation in multiple interrelated physical, mental, social and interpersonal, and occupational domains.

Second to present was Dr. Daniel Dodgen, PhD of the US Department of Health and Human Services, where he directs the Office of Operational Policy and Strategic Planning for the Assistant Secretary of Preparedness and Response. His early career began in child psychology and children’s policy advocacy, yet he eventually transitioned into mental health and disaster management roles during and after 9-11. His presentation was titled “Climate Change and Extreme Weather Events: The Impact on Mental Health and Well-Being,” throughout which he described and referenced the White House’s Climate and Health Assessment of 2016. He delineated the steady increase in precipitation events in the US since the early 1900’s, as well as that of extreme droughts and heat waves in the southwest over the past decade. Also steadily increasing are the intensity, frequency, and duration of category 4 and 5 hurricanes, particularly since the 1980’s. Referencing one of Dr. Clayton’s previous points, Dr. Dodgen further belabored how we must acknowledge these major events as real and impactful everywhere, here and now (i.e., beyond visible structural damage caused to distal, “foreign” locations). Other effects include diminished nutritional value of food due to changes in soil, increased spread of vector-borne diseases, and the strained relationship between physical health and mental health. Largely due to resulting instability and tragic loss of homes and loved ones, exposure to weather-related disasters often results in mental health consequences such as PTSD, depression,

anxiety, grief and bereavement, medication dependency, substance abuse (high-risk coping methods), and suicide ideation. These disaster-related stressors and their impacts can persist for months to years on end, severely impairing individual functioning and community resiliency. Domestic violence risk increases immediately after natural disaster exposure, and veterans with preexisting mental health conditions are also 7 times more likely to develop additional afflictions. More generally, those at more heightened risk during natural disasters include children, the elderly and disabled, indigenous and rural populations, immigrants, and anyone otherwise already socioeconomically disadvantaged, as well as the first-responders attending to the situation. Indigenous populations are especially at risk of suffering from devastating impacts, since their livelihoods are much more likely to be connected to their intergenerationally significant land. Should indigenous groups need to relocate, it may have disproportionately traumatic effects on their senses of individual and community identity, as well as their economic well-being. Diminished access to healthcare services in the midst of disaster and upheaval can further exacerbate existing conditions amongst typically vulnerable groups as well, if not everyone.

Dr. Dodgen then explained how he and his team integrate mental health services into disaster responses. During the most recent hurricanes, he convened fifty Federal Disaster Behavioral Health Group coordination calls with partners such as the Red Cross and SAMSHA, as well as other regional and local organizations. He also utilized behavioral health liaison officers as part of the Incident Response Coordination Team to arrange field-level behavioral health activities. Lastly, he deployed multiple behavioral health specialists to provide services and consultations where necessary. Many other organizations can benefit from Dr. Dodgen's team's organizational model to build capacity and expand service delivery during upcoming

environmental disasters.

Third to present was Dr. Irina Feygina, PhD. She is the Director of Behavioral Science and Assessment at Climate Central LLC, an independent news organization whose scientists and journalists research and report publicly upon climate change and its impacts on society. Her presentation, "Psychological Contributions to Overcoming Disengagement and Fostering Compelling Solutions to Climate Change," coincided largely with Dr. Clayton's by investigating how people process and respond to climate change-related information. Not only did she examine people's responses to confrontation with these existential realities, but what creates and perpetuates people's resistance and disengagement in their midst. "Rather than making assumptions," said Feygina, "which is often what we do with respect to human behavior when we create policies and programs, [psychology] really gives us a way to dig in and discover what's happening from people as they encounter climate change." The many psychological processes that synergistically affect how we process and respond to climate change include cognitions, attitudes and values, needs and motives, social norms and identities, personal experience, and narratives. With regard to understanding (or lack thereof), Feygina stressed her organization's motive to discover and disseminate as much information as possible as per the information deficit model. She then expanded upon the huge difference between the developed and developing world in terms of climate change knowledge, with highly affected countries like Kenya, India, and Bangladesh having little to no access to basic information regarding drought. While always necessary, information is not always sufficient to prompt behavioral and social change. Despite the rapid increase in information access, people's general attitudes have yet to reflect ample concern and desire for major structural overhaul. This is largely attributable to worldview adherence, since we tend to respond to climate change in ways that remain consistent with



our current views, should said current views even allow such a response. In this new age of data and information science, it can also take a long time for people to fully process and accept everything suddenly at their disposal to begin with, much of which may conflict with existing beliefs.

Dr. Feygina then elaborated upon the multitude of people's needs and motives as they relate to climate change mitigation behavior. People's personal needs involve family, finances, health, and safety, while social and ideological needs include political views and "just world" theories about what is fair and to be expected in life. All of these factors influence how human beings "perceive, process, understand, encode, and recall information." Similar to what Dr. Clayton suggested regarding tailoring messages to specific groups for greatest acceptance and response rates, Dr. Feygina emphasized the importance of working with and catering to these different needs when addressing climate change issues. This is instead of working against them to completely change people's opinions altogether. Helping people to accommodate climate change mitigation into their existing ways of life not only helps fulfill psychological needs of safety, control, and belonging, but also reduces [cognitive] dissonance, anxiety, uncertainty, and fear. It will also reduce the likelihood of disengagement from the problem, which is how people maintain their existing worldviews and sense of psychological stability. Motivated cognition – the need for people to perceive things in certain ways – affects all facets of our perception, thinking, and feeling. According to Feygina, the best way to approach these cognitive hurdles is via "systems-sanctioned change," which "reframes pro-environmental change as a way to uphold what people care about and support, rather than challenge the system." For instance, it would be folly to promulgate, "Capitalism and its unbridled resource exploitation are major causes of climate change; we must do away with free-market capitalism." The issue is

much better approached as, "Being pro-environmental allows us to protect and preserve the American way of life. It is therefore patriotic to conserve our country's natural resources." This reverses the negative association between protecting the social system and the natural environment simultaneously. Above all, our paramount need for inclusion and belonging drives our decision making. Keeping this in mind is the most effective way to mobilize groups of people to accept climate change mitigation into their lives. Narratives and personal accounts from trusted speakers and messengers will further enhance and expedite this process.

Last to speak was Dr. Paul C. Stern, PhD, the president of the Social and Environmental Research Institute and a professor at the Norwegian University of Science and Technology. Dr. Stern studies climate change mitigating behaviors, particularly which ones make the greatest impact. His presentation, "Changing the Behaviors that Drive Climate Change: What People Need to Understand and How to Promote Change," began with a graph of carbon dioxide emissions (and projections thereof) from 1750 up through the future to 2100. Since the start of the industrial revolution in 1850, historical emissions up through 2018 have totaled to 515 billion tons, 3 quarters of which were released after 1965. He then discussed the interdisciplinary nature of combating climate change, which requires contributions from the physical sciences, engineering, economics, and law. For instance, while physical science research methods provide the objective evidence of carbon emissions' effects, engineering can develop the technologies to reduce fossil fuel use and capture existing greenhouse gases. Economic research methods are integral for analyses of costs and returns on investment. Lastly, law and politics must be considered to inform and implement environmentally friendly industry regulations. This last item is perhaps most conceptually relevant to behavior change, since human beings typically

behave within the limits of current laws with the tools presently at their disposal. Since climate change is man-made, behavior change is the key to its mitigation and reversal. Therefore, “the challenge is not simply to apply existing psychological theories, but to consider how psychological insights can add to or multiply what other sciences can offer.” Furthermore, we must “develop integrative theories incorporating psychological insights” for non-scientists. While natural scientists try to predict and quantify what climate change will bring, the vast majority of climate change-related risks cannot be fully quantified. Relatively non-quantifiable and unpredictable consequences include patterns of vector-borne disease spread, crop failures, floods, droughts, and other natural disasters, and the subsequent deaths, migration waves, and political upheaval. For this reason, laypeople must possess *qualitative understanding*, or solid mental models that both align with modern scientific understanding and acknowledge what is unknown, such as the extent of possible damage. After emphasizing how climate change is anthropogenic, progressive (cumulative, exponentiating), and irreversible, Dr. Stern explicated how people must be aware of climate change’s risks, challenges, and opportunities, in addition to well-established facts. Analogies are very useful in helping people understand climate change, with one likening climate change to progressive diseases such as atherosclerosis or hypertension. Both are human-induced, relatively irreversible once present, and uncertain in progression. Stern extended the metaphor by explaining how it is more effective to change high-risk, exacerbating behaviors proactively, rather than wait for a more advanced treatment after a disease has progressed to a more debilitating and costly state. Psychological experiments can help elucidate whether such analogies are consistently effective in helping people understand climate change and the utmost priority of its mitigation and eventual reversal.

The world seems vast and enormous from an everyday individual perspective. People’s absorption in their typical beliefs and ways of life, especially in locations less affected by climate change, often prevents the continuous awareness and behavior change required to combat it. This persistent lack of salience also bolsters the often contradictory, capitalistic worldviews that flourish and perpetuate in such typical modern environments. However, if left unaddressed, climate change will eventually harm even the most “stable” areas still on the same exact planet, whose homeostasis is further endangered every second. When traveling far distances by plane in a matter of hours, we can look out the window and see how small the world actually is, and how we do not have a larger, further exploitable “Planet B” at our convenience. Despite the comforts of both denial and modern amenities, we must search deep within ourselves and examine the effects of our individual and population-wide activities. It is actually quite contradictory how humans perpetually desire and exert power over other people and social systems, yet simultaneously deny the equally powerful and pivotal impact they have on the natural environment. We must therefore reframe and tout climate change mitigation as beneficial, patriotic, empowering, and stabilizing, as it is only a matter of time before we will all collectively suffer if we do not pursue a new, sustainable way forward.



**Sarah Goodman, MPH**

Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai

[SJ.Goodman15@gmail.com](mailto:SJ.Goodman15@gmail.com)

# The EHPS and the UN: How are European Psychologists engaging with the sustainable development goals?

**Lucie Byrne-Davis** **EHPS status in the UN**

*on behalf of the EHPS UN Subcommittee, University of Manchester*

The EHPS has special consultative status in the Economic and Social Council at the UN (ECOSOC). Consultative status with ECOSOC is enjoyed by only 5,083 non-governmental organisations (NGOs), which is not many world wide, and ECOSOC has good systems for facilitating meaningful contributions. ECOSOC coordinates the economic, social and related work of the 14 United Nations specialized agencies, functional commissions and five regional commissions<sup>1</sup> and is the central forum for formulating policy recommendations to the UN member states. There are 54 member states in ECOSOC, including 14 African, 11 Asian, 6 Eastern European, 10 Latin American and Caribbean and 13 Western European and other states. The bidirectional relationship between ECOSOC and the NGOs means that NGOs can help raise awareness of relevant issues, play a role in advancing UN goals and provide expert analysis of issues, as well as networking and lobbying at UN conferences and events.

## What does that mean?

Since gaining special consultative status, in 2015, the EHPS UN sub-committee has been exploring links with the UN, gathering information and advice from colleagues involved in the UN and developing strategy for how EHPS can make the

most of its status for the benefit of the UN and EHPS members. Activities have included involvement in the Psychology Coalition at the UN (PCUN), which organises psychology professional organisations and NGO contributions and holds an annual day to highlight psychology at the UN. EHPS representatives join monthly coalition virtual meetings. This year, at the annual EHPS conference in Galway, we decided that one of the most valuable activities we could undertake would be to gather intelligence about how EHPS member activities are related to the UN sustainable development goals (SDGs)<sup>2</sup>.

The SDGs are the way that the UN articulates what are the global challenges we face which we need to tackle to provide a better and sustainable future for all. The aim is to achieve 169 targets within 17 goals by the year 2030. (figure 1). Each goal is quite broad, but linked to each goal are a set of targets, which are more specific. Goal 3, good health and well-being, is the most obvious goal to which health psychology has a crucial contribution<sup>3</sup> (figure 2). Other goals, such as Goal 6 (clean water and sanitation) are also areas where health psychology can, and does, play an important part. The UN has an interest in improving assessments for tracking the achievement of these goals, an area to which health psychologists (for example through the PCUN) can contribute. Indeed, looking at the targets for each goal, it is possible to see where the work of the EHPS members has, and could have, an

<http://csonet.org/content/documents/Brochure.pdf>  
<http://sdg.iisd.org>  
<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdg3>



Figure 1. The Sustainable Development Goals (will need checking for permissions)

impact on achieving SDGs.

## What now?

- Raising the profile of the SDGs within EHPS is a key goal, since if we wish to maximise our consultative status, we need to be aware of how our work impacts on SDGs and be able to mobilise our members to contribute to ECOSOC and broader UN consultations. We will be asking members to think about how their work relates to SDGs when submitting abstracts for EHPS conferences in the future.

- Another key aim is to bring together EHPS members who are working, or would like to be working, in low and middle-income countries, as often these activities are more explicitly focused on the sustainable development goals. We will be developing a special interest group in health psychology in low- and middle-income countries within EHPS and will be asking members if they

would like to join.

- Thirdly, health psychologists often struggle with the balance of research, practice and impact and we aim to encourage more conversation between members, at conference and in other fora, about how we manage the tensions between practice and policy development and the conduct of high quality research that contributes to the science of psychology.

### Goal 3: Good health and wellbeing

*This goal includes a number of targets that focus on changes in lifestyle, uptake of screening and vaccinations, and improvements in the delivery of health services, all of which are key parts of the role and research of health psychologists.*

Figure 2. Goal 3 alignment with health psychology

We will be in touch with EHPS members about our work over the next year. In the meantime, if you have comments or questions about the EHPS UN Sub-committee you can contact our chair [lucie.byrne-davis@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:lucie.byrne-davis@manchester.ac.uk)

**Lucie Byrne-Davis**

HCPC Registered Health Psychologist and Senior Lecturer in Assessment and Psychometrics in the Division of Medical Education at the University of Manchester, UK

**[lucie.byrne-davis@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:lucie.byrne-davis@manchester.ac.uk)**



# A brief introduction from Val Morrison, Grants Officer of EHPS EC

**Val Morrison**  
*Grants Officer of EHPS EC*

I am very pleased to be able to introduce conference and workshop reports from some of the successful 2018 EHPS Conference Grant

awardees, and thank them for their reflections and wise words. The reports below again demonstrate how relatively small amounts of funding from the EHPS EC Grants Committee can provide relatively early career researchers – talented PhD students and postdoctoral students—with a great opportunity to learn new material, communicate their own science, engage in lively debate and make new contacts .... all whilst also enjoying the social scene, which this year was offered by the wonderful Galway and colleagues.

THE EHPS Grant scheme runs annually for EHPS members, with competitively funded awards for Conference grants (subject also to an accepted presentation); and CREATE and SYNERGY workshop grants (also subject to acceptance on the workshop). All submissions are dual reviewed and are awarded based on a personal statement demonstrating research relevance, and the need for, and potential added value of, EHPS funding support to their research. It is our hope that each year our awardees will present a brief report of their attendance for publication in this Newsletter.

I hope you find this year's submissions interesting, and possibly inspiring- there may be another few to follow in a subsequent EHP. If you are thinking of applying for Grant funding for EHPS 2019 in Croatia please keep an eye on our website for this year's call.

Val Morrison, EHPS Grants Officer



**Val Morrison**

School of Psychology, Bangor,  
University, UK

[v.morrison@bangor.ac.uk](mailto:v.morrison@bangor.ac.uk)

# “Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has.”

**Margaret Mead, cultural anthropologist**

**Julia Baenziger**  
University of Lucerne

When the 2018 CREATE workshop was announced, I instantly knew it would be a unique opportunity to help me determine relevant milestones for my future career. Dedicated to Career Development and hosted by Prof Dr Pilvikki Absetz and Prof Dr Brian Oldenburg, the 20th CREATE workshop took place on 19-21 August in Galway, Ireland. “*What do I want to be when I grow up – and how to get there?*”; as a third-year PhD Candidate I was eager to answer those questions for my future. My thesis defense is slowly but steadily approaching and will mark the beginning of a new chapter bringing up many new windows of opportunity. Overwhelmed by the vast variety of interesting career paths, making a choice seems even scarier than defending my PhD.

A few minutes into the networking exercises, I discovered that everyone seemed to have similar questions and uncertainties buzzing around in our little researcher brains and we all quickly realized – ‘I am not alone’. And more surprisingly, the facilitators stated: It is OK, to have ‘no idea’. As a matter of fact, they acknowledge that career paths often are shaped through ‘serendipity’, which means to stumble unintentionally over valuable things or fortunate discoveries. Of course, having a plan that we pursue with focus and persistence is essential for success, but we should remain flexible, reviewing our goals every few years and be

prepared for opportunities ‘out of the blue’.

From another group activity, we learnt to identify and reflect on our strengths, which was a struggle for most of us. We realized, we do not often talk about our strengths and tend to emphasize what we do not know instead. However, acknowledging our own skills and competencies is crucial. What was a supposedly homogenous group of researchers in ‘health psychology’ turned out to be heterogeneous, covering a great range of abilities and know-how. When bringing those skill sets together and forming collaborations, we can achieve great things. The facilitators highlighted another key factor for success: “*Without cross-disciplinary teams, collaborations and partnerships, we can never make a difference.*” Furthermore, the facilitators emphasized the value of mentoring and encouraged us to reach out to our role models, inviting them to be our mentors.

Equipped with the diverse knowledge and cultural backgrounds of the workshop group, we then tackled the challenges of the next task: ‘brand yourself’. The aim was to teach us how to translate our vision into a strategic plan: From skills and capabilities to PRODUCTS. How can we sell and raise awareness of our product, e.g. a counselling service, a prevention program, a new policy, ...? This hands-on exercise helped us to become more concrete about our plans, including who to involve and what to expect realistically. It helped us resolve a lot of our uncertainties raised before and in previous exercises. Here, Pilvikki and Brian

highlighted how important it is to keep our personal connotation and enthusiasm because many people have great ideas. Therefore, communicating our objectives and vision statement with a positive attitude can make the difference. A quick peer-to-peer coaching apropos social media provided helpful insights into managing and using those outlets for effective communication.

Throughout the workshop, re-connecting with and meeting new peers enabled us to exchange and learn about our fellows' ideas concerning *careering* and their personal strategies, which provided valuable insights into individuals' rationale and processes in decision making. It was truly inspiring to hear about their plans for the future and to see their dedication, motivation and passion.

Overall, having CREATE organize this workshop on career development was exceptionally beneficial. It was a perfect fit for my background as a health psychologist and with my aspirations as an early career researcher. It helped me identify my core strengths and weaknesses that need further development, as well as important measures of success and strategic steps to achieve future milestones.

It was a great honour to learn from the personal stories of Prof Oldenburg and Prof Absetz, two leading experts in the real-world implementation of health promotion and disease management. Thank you for sharing your life story, career pathway, '*careering mistakes*', and confidence towards the unknown. It was incredibly encouraging to listen to their advice. Special thanks go out to the CREATE and EHPS Executive Committees for the wonderful organization, which we can count on every year. And last but not least I would like to extend my sincerest thanks to the European Health Psychology Society for awarding me the CREATE grant to participate in the 2018 CREATE workshop in Galway, Ireland!

I left Galway feeling empowered by all the support from research fellows who have great ideas and great minds. Being part of the CREATE family,

where everyone can count on everyone and is working in the best interest of everyone – I sensed we are ready to navigate the next steps in our careers to tackle any challenge and change the world!



### **Julia Baenziger**

University of Lucerne, Dept. of Health Sciences & Health Policy, Switzerland  
Behavioural Science Unit, Sydney Children's Hospital, Randwick, Australia  
School of Women & Children's Health, University of New South Wales, Australia  
[\*\*julia.baenziger@outlook.com\*\*](mailto:julia.baenziger@outlook.com)

# Reflections from the 2018 CREATE Workshop

**Siobhán M. Griffin**

*University of Limerick,  
Ireland*

When I realised that the EHPS conference was being held in Ireland I was overjoyed. My interest was sparked the previous year when my twitter feed was inundated with tweets from Padova. I was also delighted at the relevance of the accompanying CREATE workshop's theme to my career stage "What do I want to be when I grow up – and how to get there?". As I am entering the final stage of my PhD I am currently facing this question. What kind of career do I want? What do I need to achieve this goal? And, what should I do if (a) I cannot achieve it, or (b) I decide it is not for me? The only issue was funding to attend the workshop and the conference, but luckily, I was awarded one of this year's CREATE workshop grants which covered the costs of both!

The workshop, facilitated by Pilvikki Absetz and Brian Oldenburg, was held over two days with a pre-workshop networking event. The activities during this pre-workshop event were brilliant at establishing a relaxed and an inclusive environment for the remaining two days. The structure of the networking session ensured that nearly all participants spoke to each other and got to know where people are from, what their research area is, what their career stage is and their personal likes/dislikes. I felt this was important in developing a space where everyone felt they could share their thoughts and ideas, resulting in high quality, honest discussions.

What struck me most about the experience was the uncertainty among participants about entering academia. But if someone does not choose an

academic career what other options are there? If any? It was reassuring to know other people had similar concerns and worries about the future. We often hear professors complaining about workloads, the amount of administration, the lack of work-life balance. We see senior lecturers in their offices early in the morning and office lights on around campus until well after 8 or 9pm. The discussions were open, honest and quite a relief. It is clear that entering such a profession needs to be a calling. But with excellent time management skills, and a good support network it is extremely possible to enjoy life while also being successful in the academic sphere.

There was also a lot of discussion regarding the opportunities available outside academia. To be honest this choice never really appealed to me, despite the clear statistics that it is not possible for everyone with a PhD to be a lecturer! However, it was interesting to learn the ways in which different businesses can utilise the skills that a PhD cultivates. In particular, job opportunities within government and nonprofit organisations which require individuals to test interventions, design research, analyse data and disseminate the results to the public. The most appealing aspect of this work, for me, is how research within such organisations can help inform policy and have real life, applicable results. It gave me food for thought in how my skills can be used, and the different projects running that perhaps one day I could become involved in (outside of teaching of course)!

On the final afternoon we had to "sell" a product/research idea that we created in our groups. Compared to the activities that required us

to sell ourselves or plan our career milestones, this activity was relatively easy. It was effortless to brainstorm advantages and unique selling points of our imaginary business, but when it came to myself I was stumped. From group conversations it appears as if we all suffer from a case of “everyone has these skills”. However, if we hadn’t engaged in the PhD process would we have developed these skills and attributes? We live in a culture where everyone we work with on a daily basis has these skills. But outside of our immediate work and academic networks not as many people know how to, for example, manage large projects or conduct statistical analyses. During the research process PhD students learn skills which industry and organisations are actively seeking. However, among students these skills tend to be viewed as common-knowledge and ordinary within our work circles!

An additional benefit of receiving the grant was the opportunity to attend the EHPS conference. I was able to attend presentations from some of the leading researchers in Health Psychology, giving me plenty to consider in terms of my current, and future research. Because of this funding I was also able to present my own research orally at EHPS, an opportunity I otherwise could not afford. I had a brilliant week at the workshop and conference; discussing research, potential collaborations and having fun. I left Galway full of ideas, unforgettable memories and plenty of motivation to finish the PhD.

I am extremely grateful to the organising committee of the CREATE workshop for the grant to attend this year. It truly was a fantastic experience. The whole week was well-organised and filled with stimulating discussions and friendly people. I am looking forward to next year’s conference already!



### **Siobhán M. Griffin**

PhD Candidate in Psychology, Dept  
of Psychology, University of  
Limerick, Ireland

**Siobhan.Griffin@ul.ie**



# Making An Impact: The 32<sup>nd</sup> EHPS Conference

**Rebecca Dalgetty**

*University of Dundee*

The 32<sup>nd</sup> Annual EHPS 2018 Conference was my first conference, both as an attendee and presenter. I must first thank the EHPS for awarding me one of this year's conference grants; it funded a personally and professionally indispensable experience.

This year's conference was placed against a stunning background of lush greenery, musical flair, and bustling city life in and around NUI Galway. There was a great sense of energy and enthusiasm within the university during this time, with several opportunities for socialising, networking, and professional development through arranged social events, workshops, posters, and presentations.

I was fortunate enough to book a workshop on *Using The Person-Based Approach to Develop Successful Health Behaviour Change Interventions* delivered by Katherine Bradbury, Leanne Morrison, Kate Morton, and Katy Sivyer. It was hugely informative for both those without relevant experience such as I – where we were shown the necessary steps of intervention development – and those looking for additional tools to use in their current or future research. One topic the workshop covered was the “use of think aloud interviews” in conjunction with the “Table of Changes” approach. This presented a systematic and efficient method for person-centred refinement of interventions through the tabulation of comments expressed in these interviews, which were then grouped according to intervention characteristic/modification. These were then coded using a unique coding framework to indicate reasons for

change, and categorized as to whether they are a “must”, “should do”, “could do”, or “would do in future” (MoScow analysis) to prioritize potential modifications. I learned a lot about the different stages of this process through this, along with helpful tools to use for this task in the future should I encounter it.

Additionally, this was my first contact with like-minded others who I then socialised with throughout the duration of the conference, which for someone like me who had travelled on their own was very welcome. As a budding wannabe health psychologist/ clinical health psychologist, it is always useful to have a chance to make connections with others at similar stages to myself whom I might collaborate with in future. (This was also the time when I was enlightened as to the benefits of possessing a research oriented twitter account!)

The friendly nature of the international health psychology community was apparent from start to finish, complemented by the hospitality of the EHPS, NUI Galway, and The Galmont Hotel whom provided lively drinks receptions and a tasty conference dinner catering to all diets. Additionally, an excellent impromptu buffet dinner was made to compensate for a scheduling mix-up, which further highlights the incredible effort and generosity of these organisations. These events gave plenty time for discussion, entertainment, and deep appreciation of some Irish music and Irish dancing.

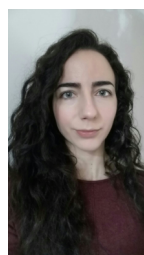
Upon seizing the opportunity to present my MSc project results (Dalgetty, Miller, & Dombrowski, 2018) in front of a knowledgeable international audience, I received valuable returns. My

communication and presentation skills were strengthened, and experts provided their feedback which has since been applied to the project manuscript intended for publication. There was an abundance of interesting poster presentations and oral presentations to choose from covering a surprising variety of domains. Among these were new insights into the future of theory through the development of propositions to provide structured (and more easily testable) presentations of theory (West, Michie, Lefevre, Godinho, Connell, et al., 2018); the evaluation of current efforts against alcohol consumption in the form of Dry January campaigns (de Visser, 2018); and the benefits and challenges of training Health Psychologists in Scotland (Swanson & Dale, 2018). The supportive nature of fellow health psychology colleagues and enthusiasts was evident within the question time and symposia discussions, which allowed us to share knowledge and propose refinements when developing ideas for future directions and applications of research.

The EHPS 2018 conference overall was an eye-opening experience as to the range of applications of health psychology in both research and interventions across many settings, health behaviours, and populations. This, along with the vast reach that health psychology has is evidenced by its consideration in other domains such as agriculture, IT, national economic policy, and post-disaster management. The topic of health behaviour theory – in their creation, refinement, application, and testing – also appeared quite prominent and popular this year, indicating potentially significant advancements on the horizon for health psychology as a whole. I look forward to seeing what health psychology research has uncovered during the time until the EHPS 2019 Conference in Dubrovnik, Croatia. Lastly, I extend my many thanks to the organising committee this year, to the EHPS, and to NUI Galway for making this year's conference a huge success for all its attendees.

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### Rebecca Dalgetty

University of Dundee

**REDalgetty@dundee.ac.uk**

**Twitter: @RebeccaDalgetty**

# Reflections on the CREATE workshop 2018

## Tobias Volk

*University of Konstanz*

There are numerous ways that people end up doing what they are doing. Some paths are chosen deliberately, other roads may appear by chance and it is just tempting or reasonable to follow them. Many people likely remember experiencing a mix of fortuity and structured goals striving when they appraise their career today. They look back at their achievements, lessons learned, good and bad decisions. But what about the beginning? What is “career”? What are my goals - I can name them, right? These are just some of the questions, this year's CREATE workshop “What do I want to be when I grow up - and how to get there?”, facilitated by Prof. Dr. Pilvikki Absetz and Prof. Dr. Brian Oldenburg, encouraged early career researchers to ask themselves.

I am Tobias Volk, a first year PhD student from the University of Konstanz, Germany. To my excitement, I was accepted as one of the EHPS CREATE grant recipients. Therefore, I had the chance to challenge myself with pondering over the questions addressed in the workshop and attending the conference afterwards. Otherwise this would not have been possible, and for that I am very thankful.

As a possibility for the group to break the ice, Sunday was dedicated to becoming acquainted with each other. The first challenge revealed, was to come up with three personal strengths another participant could tell the group about. The atmosphere and dynamic in the group were great from that first moment on. After this, more networking activities, like an extensive and fruitful

“speed dating session” took place. In the evening the group went out for dinner to one of Galway's countless pubs where we had the chance to continue former conversations or just chat in an informal and comfy setting. This brought the group closer together and set perfect preconditions for the following two days of the workshop.

Monday's schedule built on the questions we answered in advance to the workshop. We reflected on our skillsets and shared our thoughts with the others. I perceived these discussions as very supportive and understanding towards every member's thoughts, which especially helped because of the personal character of the topic. Many participants surely realized that they have more skills than they thought of before. Some skills that have been gained by working in academia seem not so obviously revealed at first glance. Taking this further, a later task required us to think of a way to sell these skills. Thinking of what you can do that others would pay for, elicited a lot of ideas for alternative paths outside academia. Because of the tough reality faced by PhD candidates and early career researchers regarding future job prospects at Universities, uncertainty about career planning seems to commonly linger in the young academic's mind. Further, this uncertainty seems partly to be fueled by a lack of information about alternative paths. It was great to see how many different ideas the groups came up with, combining the strengths of their members in attractive portfolios for potential companies. Also, a discussion about the meaning of “career” and the possible shapes of careers elicited some encouraging thoughts. “Career” often seems to be characterized in terms of achievement, monetary

rewards and straightly climbing up the ladder but there are also more descriptive dimensions to it and views more appreciative of changes of course that augment the term's meaning. The day was framed by presentations by the facilitators, giving insights in their careers and life courses which offered an exclusive opportunity to get first-hand advice from experienced personalities in health psychology.

The final day started with a revision of our goals and showed how planning for such goal repetition is necessary to stay in line with one's own aims. Further on, we examined our social networks, reflecting on existing bonds, which connections could be boosted or reinforced and where possibilities for establishing new contacts exist. We also addressed important current considerations around the use of professional websites and social media to present oneself and as platforms for networking. Besides websites like Research Gate, Twitter was the number one named service on the rise that was considered to help researchers connect with other researchers, in order to share ideas and information and access these from people all over the world. The session continued with elaborating on the potential companies where we could 'sell' health psychology skills, i.e. the task was to consider stakeholders and what offering our skills or services to potential customers could actually look like. One thing that became clear was, that for realization of such ideas, the importance of being open to interdisciplinary collaboration cannot be stressed enough. This emphasized the value of two-way knowledge exchange and collaborative networks between academics (not always just health psychologists) and people with competencies in various disciplines outside academia (e.g. practitioners, policy makers, commercial companies and NGOs).

At the end of the final day, the facilitators took time for answering open questions. One participant wanted to know what makes young health psychology researchers memorable in the eyes of more established health psychologists. I liked that

question particularly because it aims at a crucial part of networking at early career stages. Among advice on how to be remembered were demonstrating opportunities for collaboration and of course high-quality publications. As general advice, the facilitators recommended finding a mentor besides our supervisors, who we could meet regularly to consult with about career questions and to discuss our goals. From my perspective as a first-time participant, the workshop was just a great success. It perfectly prepared me for the conference as well, where I could draw a lot of motivation and ideas for my present and future research. Reaching the end of my report, I want to thank all participants, the facilitators and organization team, as well as the grant committee, who all contributed to make this workshop a fantastic experience. I highly encourage other young researchers to participate in next year's workshop. I am looking forward to seeing you there.



**Tobias Volk**

University of Konstanz, Germany  
[tobias.volk@uni-konstanz.de](mailto:tobias.volk@uni-konstanz.de)

# Challenges & opportunities in a constantly changing field: Reflections from the 32<sup>nd</sup> EHPS Conference

**Vasilis S. Vasiliou**

*University of Cyprus*

It was my honour to be awarded funding from the EHPS EC grant scheme to attend the 32<sup>nd</sup> EHPS conference. I feel like it was a critical time to attend the conference as the conference's main theme, emphasizing processes in our psychological theories and how our research impact current practice and policy, was highly appropriate to my own research. My research, which focuses on developing innovative, digitized prevention and intervention programs for vulnerable young adults, based on Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT; Hayes et al., 2011) was heavily informed by the content delivered at this conference - which included numerous high-quality presentations addressing cutting-edge theoretical, methodological and digital intervention challenges in Health Psychology. I will focus my reflection on three domains, which I personally found most helpful and important: the pre-conference workshop experience, moments from the conference's activities, and my presentations.

## **Domain I: The Pre-conference workshop experience**

Throughout my Clinical Psychology training, I have been focusing on attending clinical workshops, aiming at improving my clinical competencies. This year, though, I chose to attend a research-based workshop to advance my research skills in ecological momentary assessment (EMA), a method of collecting intense repeated measures in participants' daily life (Johnston, 2016). Coming

from a Behavioral Medicine background, I find EMA a promising way to assess, in-the-moment, the effect of a digitized intervention (e.g., a mobile app. or a wearable device) or examine a set of health-related behaviors, thoughts, and emotions as they happen in patients' context. During the half-day workshop, I familiarized myself in the set of techniques used in EMA. I also reflected on the numerous applications of EMA in Health Psychology and learnt how to design an EMA study, following a theory-driven approach. What was really valuable for me, though, was the practical examples other researchers shared in implementing EMAs studies, the pitfalls/ difficulties faced, and how they overcame them.

EMA is a challenging method due to the many fast-moving variables involved in collecting and analyzing data, and so attending this group-based interactive workshop, allowed me to think how I could apply EMA to my own future research. My post-doctoral research, beginning soon in collaboration with Dr. Samantha Dockray at the Department of Applied Psychology, University College Cork (UCC), Ireland, will examine the efficacy of a personalized digital intervention to reduce the use and harm associated with recreational drug use in college populations. EMA will help us identify key mechanisms that facilitate drug cessation or harm reduction behaviors, associated with recreational drug use.



## **Domain II: Moments from the conference's activities**

The conference's program included an impressive breadth of themes addressed within Health Psychology. I found the symposium on the use of EMA and diaries to measure health, behavior, and determinants highly interesting because the presenters, apart from illustrating findings from their work, highlighted methodological and statistical challenges they had encountered. For instance, Katia Ferrar (2018), reported several systematic biases in adherence to adult health-related mobile EMA and stressed the importance of accurate reporting compliance. Also, Ann DeSmet (2018) described issues regarding user engagement, the importance of piloting and facilitating convenience to participants, and the need for stimulating participants' interests in order to increase ecological validity and adherence to EMA data recording. Finally, I also found it useful to know how EMA can be utilized to understand antecedents (As) and consequences (Cs) of targeted behaviors via micro and macro level analyses of within-subject means, variances, and covariances (O'Connor, 2018). This symposium stimulated my future ideas, particularly helping me to understand the challenges associated with EMA and how I could better package and deliver a set of modifiable treatment processes to facilitate behavioral changes (e.g., Vasiliou et al., 2017; Vasiliou et al., under review), as they are employed in third-wave behavioral interventions (Hayes et al., 2011) via different settings (e.g., group, web, mobile, apps-based).

## **Domain III: My presentations**

I also participated in a symposium, presenting findings from my PhD project assessing, in a randomized controlled trial (RCT; Vasiliou et al.,

under review) the effects of an ACT-based intervention for primary headache sufferers versus wait-list control groups. Notably, there was another presenter discussing an ACT-based protocol for chronic pain patients (Godfray, 2018), as well as two more presentations with related topics (Navin, 2018; Sinkariova, 2018). In addition to the interesting presentations, the symposium ended up with a fruitful discussion pertaining to the accuracy of criticism arising in a previous symposium (Coyne, 2018) regarding the efficacy of ACT for chronic pain.

Although a methodological critique of ACT's research base (as with other research bases) is welcome and necessary to the development of a discipline/topic, some of the arguments Professor Coyne presented were challenged. In particular, data and discussion of the evidence base within our own symposium countered his suggestions that there is a lack of a clear theoretical and epistemological background of ACT for chronic pain (McCracken & Morley, 2014), a lack of well-validated measures in assessing treatment outcomes (Levin et al., 2014; Monestès et al., 2016), and the use of inappropriate comparison (control) groups in RCTs, examining the efficacy of ACT for chronic pain (Gaudiano, 2009; A-tjak et al., 2015; Veehof et al., 2011). Whilst it is legitimate to highlight important limitations in behavioral interventions, this should be based on purely empirical evidence and solid underlying reasoning. This symposium, and other sessions I attended, highlighted the important role, informed critique and defense plays, in the career of a health psychologist.

## **Conclusions**

I left the conference fully inspired with many new ideas for future studies. Among the memorable moments, I recollect the keynote speakers who wholeheartedly shared years of accumulating

knowledge and empirical evidence, as well as the dynamic line-up of fresh ideas presented in numerous posters. As I am now preparing myself for relocating to Ireland, I feel that a decision to return to academia, after a year spent in clinical practice, was the right choice for me. I am now ready for new research challenges and I am confident enough that the EHPS and health psychology community can keep motivating me throughout my career.

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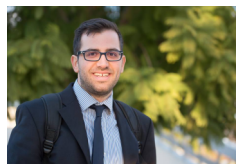
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### **Vasilis S. Vasiliou**

Clinical Psychology & Behavioural Medicine Laboratory, Department of Psychology, University of Cyprus, Cyprus

[vvasil05@ucy.ac.cy](mailto:vvasil05@ucy.ac.cy)

# EHPS 2018 Conference report

**Rebecca K. Webster** I am very thankful to  
*King's College London* have been awarded one of

the 2018 EHPS conference grants which gave me the opportunity to attend and participate in the 32<sup>nd</sup> Annual EHPS conference in Galway. Having just completed my PhD this was an important conference to attend to support and establish my career as an early researcher. The EHPS conferences are renowned for their outstanding keynotes, high quality presentations and posters, and excellent social events, which attract international delegates from far and wide. And this year certainly did not disappoint, not least because of the unexpected, but brilliant, two conference dinners!

Starting off the conference I was spoilt for choice as to which parallel sessions to attend due to the variety of topics covering many of my specific research interests, but also broader methodological issues and discussions within health psychology that are useful to researchers across the field. It was very interesting to hear about the development of digital interventions and researchers' experiences of using such methods – these are undoubtedly going to become more prominent over the coming years given how digital interventions can be used within such a wide variety of populations and health areas. Marques et al.'s. (2018) talk on using theory based digital interventions for weight loss maintenance certainly expanded my knowledge and made me consider the potential for digital interventions in my own research. I also found the session on testing the feasibility and acceptability of interventions useful. Feasibility testing is imperative for leading

up to and justifying a full scale confirmatory trial, and I will certainly draw upon the presenters' methods, findings and experiences to help me with interventions I plan to do in the future.

In the parallel session I was presenting in, it was interesting to hear about other studies in the field of risk perception. Similarly to my work, the research presented on the trajectories for cholesterol related risk perception and how this changed after feedback on cholesterol levels (Lages et al., 2018) and the effect of whether feedback was congruent or incongruent with their risk expectations (Kollman et al., 2018), highlighted the importance of expectancies in the context of processing risk information. In addition, the audience were very engaged throughout our session and I was grateful for the chance to disseminate my work to the wider health psychology network and in return receive some useful comments and questions to think about for the future.

During the conference I was able to attend French's (2018) state of the art presentation on bias in complex intervention RCTs due to participant reactions to measurement. It was intriguing to learn more about question-behaviour effect and how measurement bias can come about through main effects, but also interactions with the intervention. I will be keeping an eye out for the upcoming set of guidance statements on how best to reduce bias due to measurement in RCTs of health interventions and will consult these when designing future trials.

I also welcomed the roundtable discussion on how health psychology influences health globally but also what more we can do to influence policy (Soares et al., 2018). It is something that we are all

trying to achieve as an end result of our research but only a few of us are successful in doing so. There were some useful suggestions discussed such as training researchers early during their undergraduate/postgraduate education to write for policy effectively. Professor Susan Michie also highlighted the launch of the new NIHR Policy Research Unit in Behavioural Science at UCL, one of 13 new research units designed to inform decision-making by government departments, the NHS and Public Health England over the next 5 years. Obviously, we aren't going to influence policy overnight, and most do not have access to a policy research unit, but I look forward to hearing further outputs from this discussion and the impact these units have over the coming years.

Throughout the conference, the talks were supplemented well by the varied and very busy poster sessions. I had fun hunting down the posters I had highlighted in the programme and discussing the research in a more informal setting. The poster sessions were also a great place to bump into other presenters I had listened to in the various parallel sessions and therefore provided a great opportunity to network.

The keynotes were excellent and well attended throughout the conference. Professor Molly Byrne's (2018) keynote on "Increasing the impact of behaviour change intervention research: Is there a role for patient and public involvement?" resonated with me the most. Patient and public involvement was a significant help in my PhD when designing nocebo research involving elements of deception, and it is becoming increasingly important. For example, it is now common for funders to ask for patient and public involvement plans in research proposals. Molly's keynote opened my eyes to different strategies that can be used for PPI to help ensure our research is important to the patients as well as moving the field forward, avoiding significant research waste. These strategies and Molly's experience of using them will influence how I approach PPI in the future.

Finally, I cannot finish without mentioning the highlight that were the conference dinners. It perhaps seemed like the organising committee's worst nightmare when we all descended to The Galmont on 23<sup>rd</sup> August for the conference dinner, with the hotel convinced it was booked the day after. However, the immediate response and support from the EHPS community was admirable, heart-warming and made me proud to be a member. The hotel soon admitted fault putting together a last-minute conference dinner for us all, and many of us who were still around the following evening came back for round 2, with plenty of energy left in our reserves to fill the dance floor again.

EHPS 2018 was thoroughly enjoyable and invaluable to my current and future career in health psychology, and I would like to thank the grant committee again for enabling my participation. It will certainly go down in EHPS history as one of the most memorable conferences, but for all the right reasons.

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**Rebecca K. Webster**

Postdoctoral researcher, NIHR Health Protection Research Unit in Emergency Preparedness and Response, Department of Psychological Medicine, IoPPN King's College London  
**Rebecca.Webster@kcl.ac.uk**

# Stan Maes: the founder of EHPS

## Marie Johnston

*University of Aberdeen*

Dear EHPS members

It is with great sadness that I write of the death of Stan Maes.

Stan will be remembered in many spheres of life - for his science and practice in health psychology, for his success in developing health psychology in the Netherlands, for his contributions to health and social care, for his active representation of European health psychology in the wider international context - but here I write about his enormous gifts to members of EHPS.

### Stan Maes as the founder of EHPS

We in EHPS owe Stan a great deal as this society would not exist without Stan's phenomenal initial work. In the early 1980s, several of us were working in health psychology, often as lonely but enthusiastic isolates within our own country and watching developments in the USA. Stan gathered us together - from Finland, Switzerland, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Italy, Germany, Belgium, Spain, the UK and the Netherlands - giving us an identity as European health psychologists and a focus for our professional and scientific endeavours. In 1986 he held an outstanding conference in Tilburg bringing together health psychologists from many parts of Europe and the USA and EHPS emerged from that first meeting. Over the following years and many meetings in Tilburg, several of us worked with Stan to turn this embryonic gathering into the society we know today. With Stan as President we held annual meetings in Trier (1988), Utrecht (1989), Oxford (1990), Lausanne (1991) and Leipzig (1992) and published proceedings. Meanwhile we worked to develop the rules, articles and legal status of

EHPS with an amusing lack of skill. In 1992 I was honoured and flattered that Stan supported me in becoming the second President. He continued as an active member of the EC until 1996 and a keen attender at conferences until limited by poor health. He delivered many papers at our conferences including his most recent invited keynote in Bordeaux in 2013.

Stan succeeded in developing EHPS because of his outstanding vision, scholarship and energy. He was generous and sociable, fluent in many European languages and able to enthuse those around him. His leadership was fundamental not only to the existence of EHPS but also to its ethos of sharing and inclusiveness, supporting young careers and enabling health psychology to thrive within and between the countries of Europe.

### Stan Maes as the supporter of young international careers

From the very beginning Stan was keen that EHPS would not only be a vehicle for those already established in their careers but that we would develop early careers. At a very early stage we held a workshop in Rome and continued to run annual postgraduate training workshops for several years. Following these Erasmus funded programmes, Stan obtained funding to run advanced workshops in Greece for graduates of the previous workshops and they in turn went on to create CREATE.

The workshops had a spirit and character that owed everything to Stan. They lasted up to 2 weeks, involved intensive 9 to 5 working, were delivered and attended by the founders and senior members of EHPS and each closed with presentations by each attending participant. But it was not only hard work. We had evenings of

entertaining performances by students including flamenco from Spain, a performing 'haggis' from Scotland and an international rendering of 'singing in the rain'. We had our own version of 'Blind Date' and were astonished to discover that the theme tune was known to all Europeans. We had local outings, splendid meals and beach bonfires. All of these diverse experiences resulted in a wonderful cadre of young health psychologists, with lasting collaborations and friendships who constitute a large tranche of current members, attenders and leaders of EHPS.

Stan's emphasis on young careers was exceptionally far-sighted as it not only ensured the future membership, it built relationships between the early and more senior members. The spirit of work, fun and conviviality contributed to the friendly cooperative atmosphere that continues to characterise EHPS meetings.

#### **Stan Maes and national representation**

Right from the start Stan involved health psychologists from many different nations of Europe. His first committee had people from many parts of Europe. He personally visited many countries, giving talks, supporting postgraduates and enabling the development of national societies. He was particularly keen to facilitate members from Eastern European countries and created financial systems that allowed them to participate in EHPS activities. From very early days we had national delegates and our newsletter had regular items on the developments within countries. He encouraged the emergence and welcoming of delegates from each country. However, in several countries delegates did not know other delegates from their own country and on occasions we had more than one national delegate from a country. Starting with these unsystematic but enthusiastic beginnings we now have a very successful, active representation of the nations of Europe.

As with all the early developments of EHPS, national representation was ensured by Stan's

foresight, organisation, social skills, goodwill and persuasiveness – and in no small way by his facility with languages, his understanding and appreciation of different cultures and his charismatic character.

#### **Finally .... Thank you Stan**

Stan has meant an enormous amount to EHPS but he has also meant a great deal personally and professionally to many members. For me personally, he has been an outstanding influence on my career, enabling me to be part of something I could never have anticipated. But beyond that he has been the most generous, delightful friend in ways too important and numerous to mention. We all owe him so much in so many ways for so many things within and beyond EHPS. Thank you Stan.

Marie Johnston

Aberdeen, October 2018



#### **Marie Johnston**

Emeritus Professor of Health Psychology, University of Aberdeen  
[m.johnston@abdn.ac.uk](mailto:m.johnston@abdn.ac.uk)

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