

INTACT Symposium

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University of Minho, Portugal

Personal experiences by Sietske Helder (*Institute of Psychiatry, London, UK*)

We had the pleasure to return to beautiful Bom Jesus in Braga! There is no better way to start your day than to walk down the 479 steps, even if it rains! We started off with a couple of pre-symposium workshop days. Here we had the chance to catch up, work-wise and personally. Everybody presented the status quo of their studies. The nice thing about this is that you get a lot of extra support for the problems you face in your own study; talking about the progress of your study to people who are not involved in the daily business of what you do can sometimes really help to get back on track. Next up was the practice for the symposium presentations. In small groups we intensely practised and perfected each presentation, and I think this teamwork definitely paid off and created polished and confident presentations! We were honoured by Ross Crosby's attendance during these pre-symposium days. His presence stimulated us to do well and we learned a lot from his feedback! Via this route thanks again for that!

I think everybody was a little bit nervous for the symposium. We were all slightly intimidated by the speakers and very honoured they came to talk to us. It was great that Pat Sullivan started off with demanding the juniors to come to the front rows and kindly pushed us to ask questions. This helped everybody to loosen up and made it very interactive, we thus learned a lot! Anna Keski-Rakhonen continued the personal tone and talked about the risk of early career death for young researchers. A very serious subject brought with good humour, it made us think. We took the advice on board and will try our best! With Cindy Bulik, Corinna Jacobi, Ross Crosby, Eric Stice, Fernando Fernández-Aranda, Stephanie Bauer, Markus Moessner and other speakers we got a very great

overview of research in the eating disorders field. For me the unique thing about this symposium was getting personal career advice and feedback on our studies from well known seniors in the field, priceless.

We ended the Braga workshop with grant writing and our student evaluation. Over the past two years we have matured within INTACT I think. There are several ideas about future plans and we are slowly but steadily starting to materialise those. The coming year is going to be very important to all of us!

The best thing about Braga? Without doubt that is our grandfather Bob Palmer's song "Hey Hans" during the conference dinner! It was amazing! (Markus, you were the biggest surprise! ;))

Sietske Helder