

9th ENYSSP Workshop Gothenburg 2013

by Kaleigh Ferdinand

As a brand-new member to ENYSSP, the 2013 Gothenburg Workshop was my first real taste of what the association has to offer. After a full two days, I can say I am more than impressed. With a great balance of informative workshops, networking opportunities and memorable social events, ENYSSP is a key resource for young sport psychology practitioners.

For a smaller conference, the organizers did a great job of offering a variety of topics to pique all interests, from workshops to keynote presentations to individualized posters. One highlight for me was the keynote by Belgian Sport Psychologist Els Snauwaert, entitled 'Do's and don't as a practitioner: a journey through 15 years of applied work'. An engaging, funny presenter, Els hit all the sweet spots for me as a young practitioner: she highlighted techniques and approaches that had been successful for her, discussed what working in the field is really like and gave insight to how she balances work and home life. A common complaint amongst my peers is a lack of 'how to' when practicing. As much as we all enjoy reading and learning theories, it's the face-to-face work with clients that both terrifies and excites us. Els is a perfect example of a sport psychologist who wasn't afraid to share her 'secrets' and give us an inside look at her day to day working life. I think the rousing applause after her lecture confirms others felt as inspired from such a great talk as I did!

The ENYSSP Organizers went a perfect two for two on keynote presenters with Kristoffer Henriksen speaking over the weekend as well. Kristoffer works as a member of Team Denmark as a sport psychologist and touched on issues of theory-guided practice when working with athletes. Kristoffer was candid in describing both his mistakes and successes and made a strong case for moving beyond some traditional mental skills techniques. His approach reminded some of us, myself included, that developing a counseling style takes practice and time. Like Els, Kristoffer was open to questions and conversations over the many social opportunities over the weekend.

These informal conversations were one of the best parts of the conference (aside from the delicious snacks and lunches, of course). Group-wide introductions and a collectively embarrassing Swedish Midsummer frog dance made for quick icebreakers and laughs. It was very refreshing to be with such an ego-less group of students, academics and practitioners; everyone was approachable and more than willing to take a minute to chat if you had a question. As a student myself, I'm always interested in hearing others' 'how did you get to where you are?' stories, and my fellow attendees had some inspiring tales to share.

The conference also offered a poster competition, and I was honored to be given the opportunity to present. Despite my inexperience, I was greeted with warm feedback and genuine interest on my topic from many and it served as a great introduction to more actively contribute to a conference. Here's to many more!

It was clear how much work and effort was put into the Gothenburg conference and I really think it paid off. It was an educational (yet still fun!) weekend and I offer my congratulations to the Organizing Committee on a fantastic job. I know the team preparing next year's conference for 2014 Leipzig already has plans in motion, and I for one can't wait for registration to open.