International Youth Mental Health Congress (IAYMH) Copenhagen

From 29-09-2022 to 01-10-2022, the 6th International Youth Mental Health Congress (IAYMH) took place in Copenhagen. Young people actively attend this congress to share their views on mental health with each other, with scientists, healthcare professionals, policy makers and others interested in this topic. On behalf of @ease, a nice delegation headed to Copenhagen, including our volunteers Dion, Eef, Sylvi and Leon.

Leon: The IAYMH2022 conference in Copenhagen was a unique experience with people from all over the world. It felt a bit like the @ease family doesn’t just exist in the Netherlands. Similar organizations from other contexts have the same goal: improving mental health among young people. Youth participation is an important issue. Right from the beginning, the organization of IAYMH2022 tried to involve as many young people as possible. Of course, they themselves are best able to indicate what they are struggling with. Thus, there were also many young people who shared their experiences related to their own mental health. Besides the scientific presentations on many different topics, these experiences were especially impressive and inspiring.

From Copenhagen I take two things with me:
1. @ease is connected to international research and is conceptually very well embedded in this international movement.
2. There is an increasing possibility in the Western world to properly address mental health among young people, but the majority of young people do not live in the Western world. How should we respond to this ‘gap’? What can be our role in this?

Sylvi: For me, going to the congress was a big step. I had never gone abroad independently before. As soon as the conference started, I was relieved to have taken the step. It was a wonderfully unique experience. So many people together, all for the same cause.
Dion:
The IAYMH2022 conference was inspiring, of course, but what set it apart for me was that it felt human and convivial. I felt welcomed by the attitude of the professionals: they were open to the perspectives of youth. For example, I felt that when I presented with Flore Joskin (communications manager @ease) and also during my co-chairing with Brioney Gee (Research Development Lead at Norfolk and Suffolk NHS Foundation Trust). And there were more human moments: together with Te Manaia Jenkins and some other attendees I made art on canvas and we laughed a lot together with the Headspace Aarhus crew during dinner. That really made it a unique experience. The people at IAYMH never made me feel that my experiences as a volunteer didn’t matter in light of “cold hard data”. Thanks IAYMH, for such a wonderfull experience!

Eef:
I had the opportunity to attend the 2022 IAYMH Conference in Copenhagen. An incredible time where I met so many amazing and inspiring people. I was absolutely amazed at the great involvement of young people during this conference. I was amazed at the eloquence with which my peers told their stories. As a future researcher and clinician with experience of mental health problems, this approach is particularly close to my heart. These stories during the conference highlight the fact that the involvement of young people in research is of utmost importance. #nothingaboutuswithoutus

As icing on the cake, as a representative of @ease, I was able to present my own work and attend the network meeting of researchers related to young people and their mental health.

See you in Vancouver 2024!