



April 2023—Issue No. 15

Association Newsletter

Empowering Members To Empower Us All

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Stay Connected!

Highlighting **SEXUAL ASSAULT AWARENESS MONTH**

“Hope is a function of struggle.” —Brene Brown

As the days grow ever-so-slightly longer and spring begins to break through the darkness (in the Northern hemisphere), we like to take this time to renew our own sense of vitality, passion, and purpose, too.

We've talked before about the emotional and physical toll of teaching Empowerment Self-Defense (ESD). We spend our professional lives (and often our personal lives, too!) thinking about themes that many would prefer to forget: sexual violence, domestic abuse, and much more. You already know. It can be draining to look long and hard at the world's darkest afflictions—and fight to change them.

Yet, wherever there is pain or struggle, we also find hope, vitality, and the will to heal. We invite you to take the change in seasons as an opportunity to remember your optimism and tend to new seeds of hope in your ESD work. Revisit the student testimonials that remind you just how deeply you have touched people's lives. Re-read studies or personal accounts that prove the efficacy of ESD training. Journal on or chat with a friend about the passion that keeps you going.

Remember exactly what we are fighting for.

A NOTE FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SAMANTHA WATERMAN

At its core, ESD is about teaching individuals how to access and use the strength and power that resides within each of us. The benefits of ESD stem from a symbiotic relationship between physical strength on the one hand and emotional and psychological strength on the other. Having the physical strength and skill to defend ourselves from attack is only part of the equation, as evidenced by the martial artist who suffers in an abusive relationship, by the high school football player who succumbs to parental abuse, by the college gymnast who endures sexual assaults by her coach.

It is not just about physical strength and ability, or even martial arts training. The physical skills build a confidence that gives individuals the courage to learn and practice the emotional and psychological skills, and the emotional and psychological skills give individuals the confidence to use physical skills when they are needed.

We believe that this makes empowerment self-defense special—and different than the types of self-defense that came before. We believe, and research clearly shows, that ESD stops and prevents violence, including sexual assault and abuse, around the world. **It is the goal of the Association to make the public aware of ESD's effectiveness so that millions more can benefit from it.**

The Association's Advocacy Program, which is in its nascent stages, will make its first campaign a public awareness campaign, to educate the public about empowerment self-defense. We will also join existing advocacy campaigns that raise awareness about sexual assault, violence against women, and much more. The Association will be doing this work year-round, from Sexual Assault Awareness Month in April through March when International Women's Day recognizes the struggles of women, from sexual abuse to harassment to unequal rights and opportunities.

I talked about the symbiotic relationship between physical training and emotional training. Like ESD itself, we believe that there is a symbiotic relationship between Association membership and successful violence-prevention. While we do our best to provide worthwhile and helpful benefits to our members and the ESD community, we think that by joining the Association, each member is also providing a benefit to the ESD community, and to the public at large, through their membership, helping to communicate to a wide audience the effectiveness of violence-prevention through ESD.

[We hope that you will consider joining us.](#)

Thank you,
Samantha

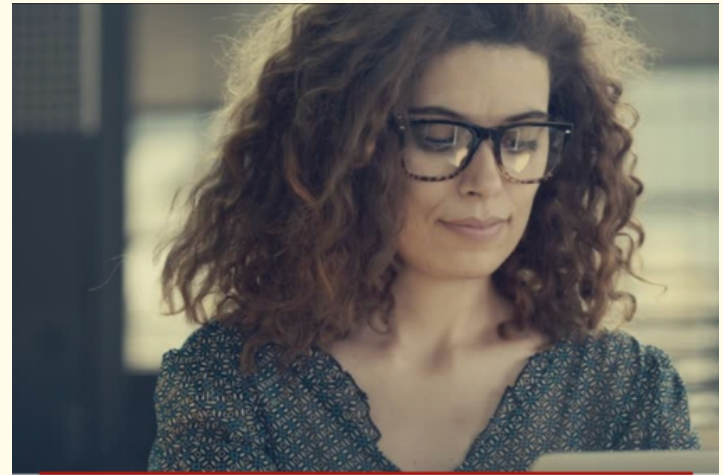
ASSOCIATION NEWS

Credentialing in 2023

We think your incredible work in ESD deserves recognition and celebration, don't you?

The Association Credentialing Exam was designed for ESD professionals—to amplify your achievements and support you to develop important partnerships or alliances with institutions that require credentials.

Applications for Period Two close May 2nd. Visit the [Credentialing Page of our website](#) to learn more and apply!



Thinking it's time to take the Credentialing Exam?

"I'VE BEEN WAITING FOR DECADES FOR AN ASSOCIATION WITH A CERTIFICATION PROCESS THAT FITS OUR INDUSTRY."

—LISA GAETA



Our Interview with Linda Štucbartová of ESD Czechia

ESD Czechia Rises to New Heights

Read our latest blog!

"For me, teaching ESD is about becoming the most authentic version of myself, completely vulnerable and ready to serve."

—Linda Štucbartová

[This month's blog](#) features an interview with ESD Czechia founder, coach, and activist Linda Štucbartová. We loved learning more about her story, and we know you will too!

Have something to share? We would love to publish your words as a feature or guest blog! Feel free to reach out to toby@esdprofessionals.org with a pitch!

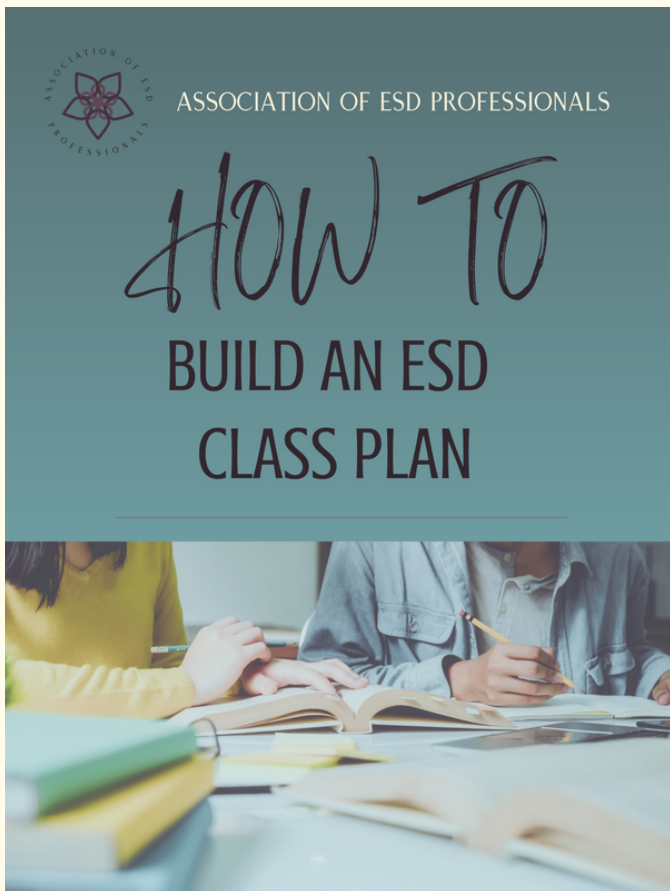
ASSOCIATION NEWS

Association Annual Conference

Save the date for April 19-20, 2024 | Costa Rica

As we mentioned last month, we decided to postpone our Annual Event until April 2024 so that more ESD professionals could plan for and enjoy the event in Costa Rica with us.

Well, you can start looking for flight deals, because the dates are set! Stay tuned for registration opening later this month, and we'll see you in Costa Rica April 19-20, 2024.



Organize Your ESD Knowledge

Do you ever get overwhelmed thinking about how to put together an ESD class plan? You are not alone. In fact, this is one of the most common concerns ESD instructors have, especially when they are just starting out. There is so much you want to pass along to your participants, so many activities and games to try, and so many topics of interest. Where do you begin?

This How-To will take you through the planning process step-by-step, whether you are developing a short class for a specific group or a 16-hour program you will offer on a regular basis.

Visit our [resources page](#) to download our latest How-To Guide and get your ESD out there!

ASSOCIATION NEWS



ESD Biz Tip of the Week

Engage with your followers on social media:

- Go LIVE
- Comment
- Respond back to DMs


www.ESDProfessionals.org

The graphic features a background of a hand typing on a laptop keyboard with various social media icons (star, person, @, heart) and numbers (32, 18, 9, 25) overlaid.

ESD Biz Tips of the Month

- Engage with your followers on social media.
- People like connection. Make it personal, and show your passion.
- Be specific about your target audience and niche.

These suggestions are part of our weekly series on business tips for ESD professionals! [Follow the Association on Instagram](#) for more tips, tools, and strategies to run your ESD practice with ease!

Don't Miss A Special Edition of Office Hours!

Thursday, April 27th, 1pm EDT | Online

This month, we are offering an **Association Forum: A Discussion with Business and Communications Specialists!** Drop by to enjoy insightful conversations about all sides of ESD business and practice, and gain valuable insights for your ESD work. Register [here](#).

Be sure to check out past recordings on our [YouTube channel](#), and reach out to hello@esdprofessionals.org with any requests for guests or topics!





OFFICE HOURS

LAST THURSDAY OF THE MONTH

This event is for everyone in the ESD community making critical decisions and facing business or management challenges with their ESD practice.

Guest experts will engage participants in conversation, answer questions, impart advice, and share their experiences.

If you have questions about starting or operating an ESD practice or have wisdom to impart to colleagues, please join us!





ASSOCIATION OF ESD PROFESSIONALS
GROWING EMPOWERMENT SELF-DEFENSE

ESD WORLDWIDE

If we could wave our magic wand and be in all places at once, we would be training with all of you, everywhere, all the time! The next best thing is sharing these events, celebrations and opportunities with the ESD community. Think something or someone should be included in next month's newsletter? Reach out at hello@esdprofessionals.org.



Train the Trainer in the Philippines Scaling Up through Strategic Partnership

Together with the Department of Education Philippines, ESD Asia Pacific has been training Gender & Development professionals to promote the ESD methodology for the well-being and personal development of teachers and the creation of safe and empowering learning spaces for learners, teachers, and non-teaching staff.

[Follow ESD Asia Pacific on Instagram](#) to keep up with all their exciting work!



Mujeres Fuertes Documentary Premiere

Bringing ESD to the Big Screen

Last month, ESD professional Toby Israel premiered her documentary, *Mujeres Fuertes* (Strong Women) in San Jose, Costa Rica, and online after a year of hard work in post-production. The film tells a story of self-defense, violence prevention, and freedom.

The film is not yet available to the public. The *Mujeres Fuertes* team is calling in collaborations to bring it to festivals, conferences, and streaming platforms this year! Reach out if you have ideas for distribution: tobyroseisrael@gmail.com.

ESD WORLDWIDE

Upcoming Level 1 in Slovakia

ESD Europe Going Strong

ESD professional Bianka Urbanovská is excited to share that there will be an ESD Level 1 training in Slovakia from April 23–29. ESD Europe has been making huge strides in scaling ESD through partnerships, train-the-trainer initiatives, and other high-impact

We love watching the growth of ESD in the region and cheering them on. Follow [Bianka](#) and [ESD Europe](#) on Instagram to stay up-to-date with all their achievements.



ESD in Nigeria

An Update from Adanma Nwokoma Olowa

The first quarter of 2023 has seen ESD Professional Adanma training about 25 women in vulnerable groups (FGM and Domestic Violence Survivors) in Nigeria. She also offered a session on safety and self defense during the national elections, and it appeared in different programmes on Radio Nigeria.

Her second quarter of 2023 is focused on teaching ESD to professional women's groups, including the 'Women in Media' Abuja chapter, as well as Female Heads of Private Schools in Abuja.

Adanma is on fire with her ESD work! Stay connected with her on Instagram [here](#).



ESD WORLDWIDE



(Picture from left to right: Federica Lacava, Nikki Smith, Adi Wimmer, Yudit Sidikman, Arlene Limas Oly, Julie Harmon, Heather Turnbull, Sarah E. Esquibel-McArthur)

MyPwr CSW Parallel Event

International Launch of the MyPwr App!

On March 13th, Association Member and CEO of [MyPwr Ltd.](#), Yudit Sidikman, presented the MyPwr App in a parallel event at the UN Commission on the Status of Women's Forum in New York City. The presentation also served as the international launch of the app (still in its Beta testing phase), the first product to teach the principles of ESD in a digital classroom. Yudit's presentation included live demonstrations of ESD skills, excerpts from the app and video footage from the instructor training in Rwanda. The 90-minute presentation was attended in person by CSW attendees, on Zoom and Facebook by friends and colleagues, and by 40 IMPACT instructor trainees who are in Israel for a training course.

ESD WORLDWIDE

Speaker Submissions Open!

AboutFace Women's Empowerment Tour

"AboutFace Conference Planners are looking for dynamic female motivational speakers to deliver bold and life-changing inspirations. Our committee gives priority to speakers who deliver insights with substance and a fresh unconventional style."

The AboutFace Conference is on a mission to inspire women to believe they are valuable, powerful, and capable. This could be a great speaking opportunity for an ESD professional or two! [Learn more here.](#)



2023 International Conference on Sexual Assault, Domestic Violence, and Fighting for Justice

April 11-13, 2023 | Chicago, IL

This conference focuses on sexual assault, intimate partner violence, stalking, human trafficking, and elder abuse to highlight promising practices and emerging issues to effectively respond to these crimes in all of our communities.

Learn more and register [here.](#)



WE ARE ESD PROFESSIONALS

Have you seen our ESD professionals [video](#), featuring many of you?!



We are passionate about supporting this movement by uplifting the amazing work you are doing around the world. Curious to know more about how the Association can support you? Reach out to Membership & Operations Lead Modupe Poku at Poku@ESDProfessionals.org to start a conversation.



LET'S STAY CONNECTED!

Don't be a stranger! The Association of ESD Professionals is here for you. Have a comment? Please contact us at [Hello@ESDProfessionals.org](mailto>Hello@ESDProfessionals.org) if you would like to share a celebration about your ESD work, learn more about the Association Credentialing Program, become a member, or explore other opportunities for collaboration. We always love to hear from you! Be sure to stay in touch with us wherever you like to connect virtually, too:

