



August 2023—Issue No. 20

Association Newsletter

Empowering Members To Empower Us All

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How do we **GROW?**

“Success is about the difference you make in people's lives.” —Michelle Obama

As ESD professionals strive to create a safer and more equitable world for everyone through access to violence prevention and personal safety tools, we seek to expand the ESD movement with intention and integrity. Together, we can shape a world where everyone can live without fear, fully empowered to embrace their true potential.

Growth can mean different things for different people, and so at the Association of ESD Professionals we approach this goal with curiosity and a holistic mindset. We ask as many questions as we propose answers:

- *How can we create more access to empowerment self-defense and violence prevention tools around the world?*
- *How do we grow in alignment with the principles of ESD?*
- *How do we smooth the path for collaboration and mutual support?*
- *How can we ensure that our movement remains inclusive and consistent with our shared mission as it scales up?*

We look forward to exploring these questions and others with you, and we invite you to join the conversation as a member, contributing author, or conference attendee. Read on for more ways to join us in this journey of empowering growth!

Want to share your thoughts? Send a message to hello@esdprofessionals.org!

A NOTE FROM COMMUNICATIONS MANAGER TOBY ISRAEL

My father still loves to remind me of a debate we had once – something political – when I was a freshman in university. Frustrated that he didn't see the situation like I did, I sighed and said in conclusion, "Dad, if you knew as much about this as I do, you would agree with me!"

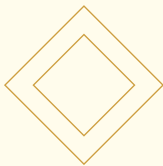
I had been studying, you see. Talking with friends deeply involved in this movement, reading op ed articles, and coming to my own conclusions—the right conclusions. Today, many years later, I still find myself tempted on quite a few occasions to revert back to that argument when faced with people who simply don't get it.

If they knew as much as I did, if they had studied gender-based violence and read the books on feminism (real feminism), if they had read all the dang blogs I wrote about empowerment self-defense... surely, they would agree with me. Right?

But, 18-year-old Toby's rhetorical default isn't helpful. It doesn't create understanding in place of prejudice, foster receptivity to new information, or forge connections in the face of starkly differing opinions. Rather, it reinforces silos and raises hackles. Tempting though it may be, I have other priorities now. I would rather be effective than right.

Do I still like to be right? Of course I do. We all do. But in my ongoing pursuit of personal growth, I have decided I don't need agreement; I need collaboration. And in my opinion (bet you saw this coming), so does the ESD movement.

So I wish to offer this reminder to you, my colleagues, as we consider where we are going—with our individual initiatives, with community or regional projects, and with the ESD movement writ large, which joins us all:



We can share deep knowledge about a subject, maybe even be in agreement on the essentials, and still see everything differently. Personality, culture, pedagogy, and a dozen other factors will see to that. However, agreement is not a necessary precursor to collaboration. Collaboration, on the other hand, is a requisite for success at scale.

As our movement grows, and as many of us come together this month in New York to discuss its future (and train, and attend VPEC), I hope we can celebrate our differences, listen with curiosity (and not for rebuttal), stay open to seeing something in a new light, and always, always consider that we don't always know what we don't know.

I look forward to continuing to collaborate with so many of you, as an ESD professional, as the consulting communications manager for the Association, and as friend, colleague, mentor, and student.

In Collaboration,
Toby

*Consulting Communications Manager, Association of ESD Professionals
Founder and Lead Facilitator, [Mujeres Fuertes Autodefensa](#).*



ASSOCIATION NEWS



Join us in April 2024!

WHO: Association of ESD Professionals
WHAT: First Annual Conference
WHERE: San José, Costa Rica
WHEN: April 19-20 (w/Member Meeting & Reception April 18 @5pm)

Registration for the Association's First Annual Conference in Costa Rica is now OPEN!

Early Bird Pricing Available

Our First Annual Conference will be held April 19–20, 2024 in Costa Rica. And for Association members, we are hosting the Annual Meeting and Reception the evening before, on April 18.

The Association conference is going to be a special opportunity to foster ties with ESD instructors from around the world, learn together, and deepen our ESD community. We are counting on many meetings of old and new friends, too.

Join us in Costa Rica to:

- Share experiences and learn from peers.
- Hear dynamic keynote speakers and panels.
- Grow together with member-led skill shares.
- Enjoy unique cultural and culinary experiences.
- Have fun with ESD professionals from all over the world!

[Register here.](#)

ASSOCIATION NEWS

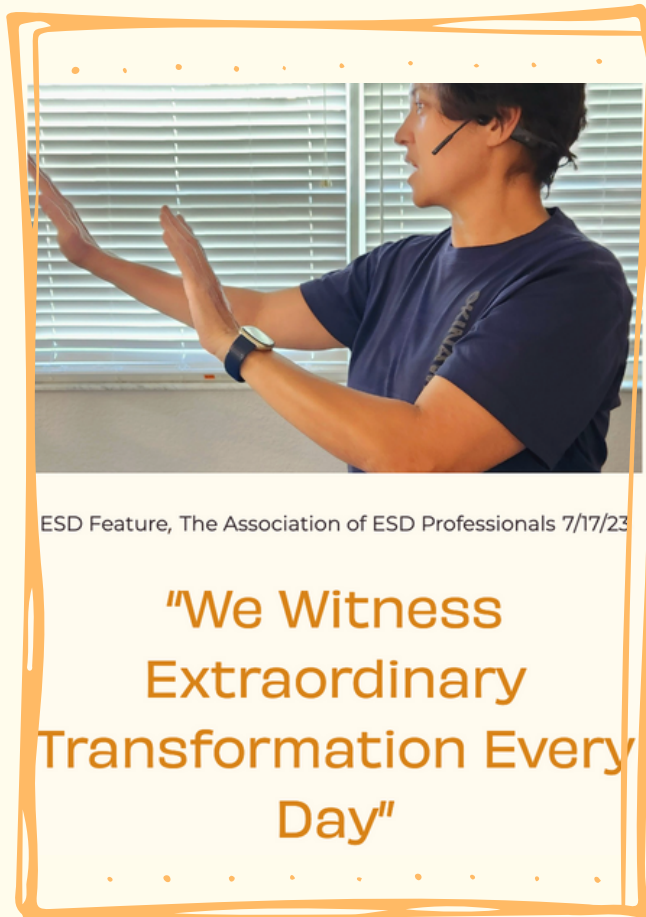
Credentialing in 2023

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

The [Association Credentialing Exam](#) will be offered once more this year. Applications for the last Exam Period of 2023 are open!

- Final Credentialing Exam Period: October 17-24, 2023

Visit the [Credentialing Page of our website](#) to learn more and apply!



Interview with Association Board Chair Michele Elefante

[Read our latest blog!](#)

"I witnessed such strength and change from those class participants that both inspired and humbled me; I was providing tools, and they were using them for their own situations and circumstances."

—Michele Elefante

[This month's blog](#) offers an inspiring window into our Board Chair Michele Elefante's passion for ESD. We hope you will love reading it as much as we did!

Have something to share? Feel free to reach out to [Toby](#) with a pitch!

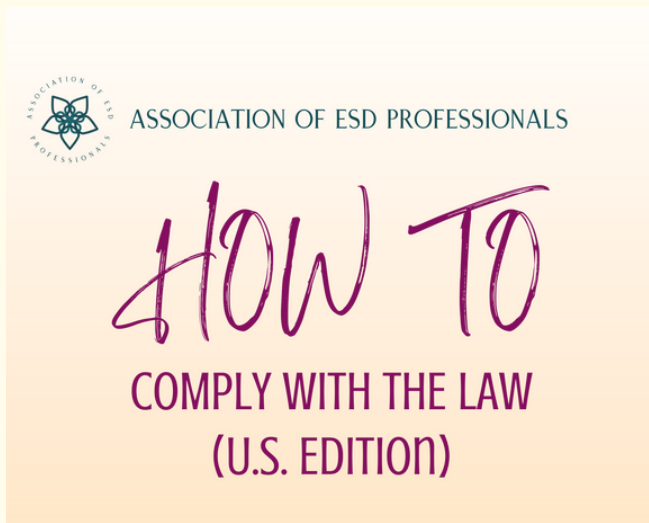
ASSOCIATION NEWS

Our Career Center is Live!

Find Mission-Aligned Work & Workers

Are you looking for work (or new employees) aligned with your mission? We invite you to utilize the [Association's Career Center](#) as you seek your next job or hire. We know that empathy and ethics are key deciding factors for many ESD professionals, so we have sought to create a values-oriented career center where you can connect with your future employer or employee.

Check it out [here](#).



How to Get Return Participants

Our Latest How-To Guide is Available!

Setting aside some time to make sure you have all your legal ducks in a row is always a good idea. With most ESD practices, the list of legal matters is relatively short.

So, it won't take too much of your time to get prepared. It will certainly take much less time than it would take to deal with the fallout should you not be prepared.

In this How-To, we lay out some fundamental steps you can take to protect yourself. The hardest part is setting aside the time to take a few key steps

Visit our [resources page](#) to download our latest How-To Guide.

ASSOCIATION NEWS



ESD Pro Tips of the Month

- Stay connected with your audience.
- Think of "marketing" as making it easy for the people looking for your offerings to find you.
- Try crowdfunding your ESD project to funnel support from your broader community.
- You cannot get this wrong!

[Follow the Association on Instagram](#) for more tools to build your ESD practice with ease!

Office Hours

On hold for August!

Every month, our guest experts engage participants in lively conversation about all things ESD business and practice in our virtual office hours. Since so many of us will be traveling near and far in August for ESD-related events, we'll be skipping this month's Office Hours.

Stay tuned for our September Office Hours [here](#).

Please reach out to [Modupe Poku](#) with any questions.

A graphic for "OFFICE HOURS" featuring a woman with glasses and a red skirt holding a tablet. The text reads: "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!" The Association of ESD Professionals logo is in the top left, and a graphic of raised hands is at the bottom right. The text "ASSOCIATION OF ESD PROFESSIONALS GROWING EMPOWERMENT SELF-DEFENSE" is at the bottom.

ESD WORLDWIDE

All ESD, all the time, all over the world! It's not a pipe dream; it's the reality we are witnessing every single day. So, where will you ESD in August?

Think something or someone should be included in next month's newsletter? Have an ESD-related celebration to share? Reach out at hello@esdprofessionals.org.



ESD Camp in Albania!

Calling all ESD Instructors!

You are invited to the first-ever "ESD in schools" Summer Camp in Albania! ESD teachers from public and private schools in Albania and in Europe are welcome to this groundbreaking event, a collaborative space where ESD instructors will come together to share knowledge and experiences..

Spots are limited, so secure yours now by registering [here](#).



Call for Applications

UN Women | through December 31st

This could be an interesting consultancy opportunity for some ESD professionals. Why not apply to be included in UN Women's "Ending Violence Against Women and Girls Roster of Experts"? All qualified candidates with expertise in one or more of the areas of expertise outlined in the [Vacancy Announcement](#) are encouraged to apply.

Learn more [here](#)!





Self-Defense is Collective!

Support the Crowdfunding Campaign for ESD in Mexico

Dayra Fyah, rapper and ESD instructor (ESDG graduate, Costa Rica, 2019), is seeking support for a new crowdfunding campaign for an instructor training in Guadalajara, Jalisco, Mexico this month. Here are the cliff notes on the incredible work happening, and why it is of critical importance:

- 7 out of 10 women in Jalisco have suffered some type of GBV.
- In 2021, 71.9% of women aged 15 or over, declared having suffered at least one incident of violence.
- Since 2017, the Mexico Self-Defense Network, with active work in 8 states in Mexico, has provided tools to more than 10,000 women from different populations.
- They will carry out their next training to strengthen the skills of the ESD instructors in the country, and to bring verbal and physical strategies closer to the Jalisco community.

Watch the video [here](#) and if you feel inspired, contribute to the campaign [here](#).

ESD WORLDWIDE



Moving On Up

News from the ESD Global Certification Committee Desk

We join the Committee (Kim Rivers, Anat Errel, Mona MacDonald, & Sarah Gordon Lavine) in congratulating the recent ESD Global instructors who achieved the following:

Level 2

Claude Jonkmans, Gjeline Doda, Gretchen Butler, Mirela Gjoni, Silvana Mangold, Tatjana Nikolic, Tetiana Kolot, Eilidh MacGilp, Maeve O’Gorman, Zie Mirabel Atanga

Level 3

Linda Štucbartová

Level 4

Gentiana Susaj, Tasha Ina Church

Great work!!



Coming Back Strong

Member Kim Rivers in Berkshire, MA

ESD is Returning to Berkshire Community College! Member Kim Rivers, who taught ESD at the college from 2006-2019, took a hiatus during the Covid-19 pandemic when the college shut down. After some refurbishment of the Field House, ESD is ready to return in a 10-class series on Saturdays. Classes run September 23rd - December 2nd, 2023.

This series is a basic introduction to ESD concepts and techniques. Topics include: situational awareness, boundary setting, recognizing boundary violations, developing assertive speech, and quick and effective physical skills.

ESD WORLDWIDE



A Year of Changes in the LAC Region

New Identity, New Name, Same Inspiration

ESD LAC is proud to announce that as a result of a deep restructuring process, today it has a new identity: as RIA-LAC (or Network of ESD Instructors in Spanish. You can still find them on Instagram as [@esd_latinoamericaycaribe](https://www.instagram.com/esd_latinoamericaycaribe) and follow their progress in English. Stay tuned for the launch of their new website [here!](#)

RIA-LAC is a feminist network with almost 50 registered members (and growing) committed to establishing and extending the reach of "Empowerment Self-defense" (ESD) as a critical strategy to address, prevent and mitigate violence in the region.

In recent months, in addition to restructuring, RIA-LAC finished their first Level A1 training in Guadalajara in June. The training was the first local event organized and hosted by participants trained in Puerto Escondido, MX, in 2021. It was a success, and 11 more community leaders are now part of the network of ESD instructors! This first training with (almost all) local instructors and participants is a big step toward building regional capacity!

Do you have ideas for collaboration or want to stay in touch? You can write to gabriela.rojas@ria-lac.org, lucia.isoardi@ria-lac.org, or daniela.lizano@ria-lac.org with any ideas for working together toward changing the culture!

ESD WORLDWIDE



Ceremony + ESD

A Native American Naming Ceremony & ESD Workshops in WA

Member Tasha Ina Church of [ElleLiveAction](#) is supporting her indigenous community in Washington state this month. Tasha's mother traveled all over the U.S. and Canada doing traditional Native American healing work with Dorris Peters. She and Tasha will be receiving their Stó:lō names in a traditional Native American ceremony. Tasha will also be doing ESD workshops for the Stó:lō tribe and the Puyallup Tribe while there. Tasha is very excited for her naming ceremony and happy to be able to support tribes in the Pacific Northwest.

Way to go Tasha! We look forward to learning your native name.

VPEC 2023 at ESDG Summer Experiences

August 24 & 25th | New York or Online

The highly anticipated Violence Prevention Education Conference, hosted by Power of XYZ. Participants will be able to join either in person at the ESDG Summer Experiences venue at Camp Echo or virtually via the Whova platform.

To learn more and register, click [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](#) 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:

