



March 2023—Issue No. 14

Association Newsletter

Empowering Members To Empower Us All

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Celebrating **INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY**

"They'll tell you you're too loud, that you need to wait your turn and ask the right people for permission. Do it anyway." —Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez

Imagine a world where we are all treated with dignity and respect. Can you see it? A world free of bias, stereotypes, and gender discrimination. A world that celebrates diversity, equity, and inclusion.

This dream is possible when we celebrate and value our differences. Together, as ESD professionals with diverse backgrounds and areas of expertise, we are fighting for the change we wish to see. Collectively, we are changing the landscape of women's rights across the globe—and we are doing it through Empowerment Self-Defense.

We hope you will take this month (and every month, of course!) to celebrate women's achievements with us. We encourage you to raise awareness and challenge discrimination. Take action. Women belong in the room. They belong everywhere. We all have a right to EXIST. And for that, we are not asking permission.

A NOTE FROM ASSOCIATION MEMBER YUDIT SIDIKMAN

Why teach "soft skills" in ESD? A reflection.

After a crazy week working on the MyPwr App I settled down to read the February Association newsletter. It was serendipitous because we have been wrestling with one of the techniques taught in the MyPwr App, and how one of the videos portrays it.

In her article on teen dating violence, member Tracie Arlington shares that, *"Because choking is the second most common weapon used next to alcohol and drugs, I teach them how to get out of all the various choke holds."*

The technique that we were struggling with is what we call a "soft skill." (ie. A physical response to an unwanted attempt to touch, which does not really harm (though the pinches can certainly hurt) the "offender" because it isn't really "that bad" or RED.)

The particular technique is what we call "wash-the-face." Which looks exactly as it sounds. As the person comes in for that hug, or to put their hands on your shoulders, you put your hands up in their face, and (depending on the situation) just do a wash-the-face action. It's not a strike, but it definitely gets attention.

One of the team members, an ESD instructor, wasn't happy with the video where we show the application of this technique in a party setting. Her concern was that the response to the big, friendly, non-consensual, maybe slightly-inebriated hug attempt was too harsh and might cause backlash and escalate the situation (ie. not the best tool for the job).

On one hand, I agreed. And, even considered eventually re-filming so it feels more aligned with our principles: *Do minimal harm and go home safe.*

I haven't stopped thinking about it, and I think I finally figured it out.

Maybe what is most important in the wash-the-face soft technique is to reduce a student's potential freeze response when someone is coming toward their neck. Doesn't matter who it is, what they are attempting to do, or the intent behind the action. It just matters that they are practicing getting their hands up and in the attacker's face.

One of the hardest obstacles in an in-person class is to get women to let anyone do anything that feels really threatening (unless they are in IMPACT, then it's what they signed on for). My guess is that there will be similar resistance in parts of the app, at least until the User has done the course three or four times.

Yup. I am expecting, or maybe anticipating, that this will be the process for some Users, and that is a very important thing. This isn't because we are failing in teaching. It's the opposite! It is because we are opening opportunities to recognize what is triggering or hard for the User, and giving them opportunities to learning more, practice more, get support, and rinse and repeat.

So, I understand the concern that the way we are portraying the "realistic" scenario doesn't feel threatening or deserving of such a "strong" response. That does leave the question of if it will escalate the situation. But my concern is that maybe having it too "realistic" will be more triggering/traumatic for Users whom we (live in-person professionals) cannot monitor, which may cause them to skip more than practice.

Are they getting their hands up and into the attacker's face? If so, that's a win for me. I'm pretty sure that once they learn other things, they will know how to modify and, as I love to say, pick the right tool for the job.

Written by: Yudit Sidikman, [MyPwr App](#)

Join the MyPwr parallel event at the UN NGO CSW67 Forum
New York, Monday, March 13th, 8:30-10:00am
Register [here!](#)

The poster features the El HaLev logo (a stylized red and white geometric shape) and the MyPwr App logo (a blue power button icon with a hand). The main title is "Scaling ESD to End the Culture of Violence" in a bold, teal font. Below it, the date and time are "Monday, March 13, 8:30 - 10:00 am". The location is "Church Center of the United Nations, 777 United Nations Plaza, New York, 2nd Floor". A hand is shown holding a smartphone displaying the MyPwr app interface, which includes a "Welcome to our community." message and a "Let's Begin" button. At the bottom, there are logos for the "COMMISSION on the STATUS OF WOMEN" and the "NGO CSW67 FORUM 6 - 17 MARCH 2023".

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 are open for Periods Two, Three and Four in 2023. Visit the [Credentialing Page of our website](#) to learn more.

"I am honored to be the first person from Africa with the ESDP title. Being credentialed as an empowerment self-defense practitioner means a lot to me, because it demonstrates that my knowledge of ESD is the same as anyone else who has trained anywhere else in the world." - Adanma

www.esdprofessionals.org/credentialing-home



The Challenges of Teaching Simulation-Based Empowerment Self-Defense

Lastest Blog

"Being in the suit takes many skills, but the most important is having the right mindset. An experienced PI understands that our big picture goal is to make this world better by teaching our students that it is okay to stand up for themselves." —Michael Peñafiel

Ever wondered what it's like to work as a Padded Instructor (PI) and create "realistic" scenarios and a sense of safety at the same time? [Read our latest blog](#) by ESD professional Michael Peñafiel to find out.

Have something to say? We would love to publish you! Feel free to reach out to toby@esdprofessionals.org!

ASSOCIATION NEWS

Association Annual Event Postponed

See you in Costa Rica in 2024!

We have decided to postpone our Annual Event until April 2024. Due to pent-up post-lockdown demand, there was no venue availability this year. Rather than reschedule for later this year and risk conflicting with other ESD events, we have decided to wait until April 2024.

We hope this change means that many more of you will be able to join us!



Fear Won't Stop Us!

We believe deeply in our work's potential to change the world, one voice and one community at a time. Even so, many ESD professionals may still balk when it comes time to "sell" or "promote" themselves or their work.

The Association of ESD Professionals team wants every ESD practice to be a huge success. This month's How-To is designed to guide you through resistance and fear so you can boldly bring your ESD offerings into the world, be of service, and live your mission.

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

ASSOCIATION NEWS



ESD Biz Tips of the Month

- Always aim high when crafting your proposal. Value your knowledge!
- Stay hydrated, stay focused. Really, water can make all the difference!
- Always make time for YOU.

These suggestions are part of our new 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 Office Hours!

Thursday, March 30th, 11am EST | Online

Join us for our monthly Office Hours designed for ESD professionals like you. 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!

A graphic for 'Office Hours'. At the top left is the Association of ESD Professionals logo. The main text reads 'OFFICE HOURS' in large letters, followed by 'LAST THURSDAY OF THE MONTH'. Below this is a chalkboard with text: '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!'. To the left of the chalkboard is an illustration of a woman with glasses and a red skirt holding a tablet. At the bottom right, there is an illustration of several hands raised in a group, and the text '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.

Apply to the Resilience Fund

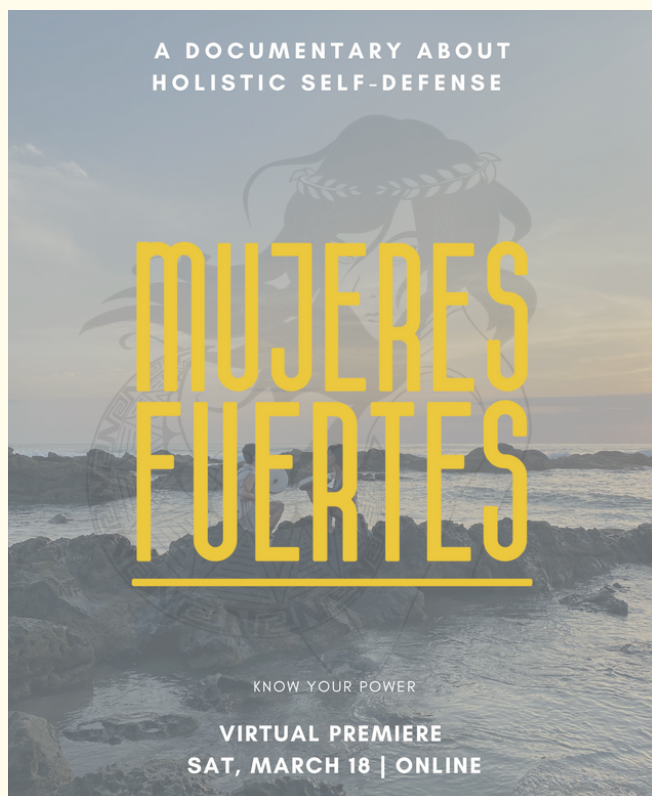
Grantmaking window closes March 15th

Do you work from a feminist, women's, girl's, trans and/or intersex rights perspective? This grant may be for you. Mama Cash funds anywhere in the world, prioritizing groups or initiatives that have an annual budget below 200,000 euros.

They are accepting letters of interest until March 15th, so time is short! Learn more about this opportunity [here](#).



Resilience Fund



A Documentary about ESD!

Mujeres Fuertes (Strong Women) Virtual Premiere | Online | March 16th

The Mujeres Fuertes Documentary is a story of self-defense, violence prevention, and freedom. After many months of post-production work, it is ready for the world!

The virtual premiere on March 18th will accompany the in-person event in Costa Rica, in order to celebrate with backers, friends and allies far and wide. It will include a brief introduction and Q&A session after the showing.

Learn more at the [Facebook event](#), and get your tickets today!

ESD WORLDWIDE

60 Teachers Trained as ESD Instructors in Albania

You want to see ESD in schools? Here's some inspiration.

In September of 2022, the "Personal Safety for Children and Young People - ESD" program was approved for 93 middle and high schools in Albania, part of the National Program for Extracurricular Activities in public schools. In January of this year, 60 school teachers from 60 schools in Albania were trained as ESD instructors for Level 1A -Education.

Gentiana is excited for what the team can achieve this year, now that over 100 professionals working in education and other fields have begun their ESD journey.



"The training of 60 teachers carried out in January this year has been one of the most challenging and, at the same time, the most beautiful experiences I have ever had. It is the first time that a 100% Albanian team carries out a training for ESD instructors." –Gentiana Susaj

NWMAF Board Elections

Get involved!

The National Women's Martial Arts Federation is now accepting nominations for open positions on the NWMAF Board of Directors.

To nominate yourself or another person, please send a bio, resume, and platform statement to vicechair@nwmaf.org.



ESD WORLDWIDE

Empowerment Anytime, Anywhere

ElleLiveAction launches new course!

Tasha Ina Church from ElleLiveAction just launched her new Empowerment Online Course. In it, she covers comprehensive ways to support your clients in acknowledging barriers preventing them from feeling empowered, identify common boundary violations and how to address them, and address blocks, triggers, anxiety loops that can halt a person's success. She also shares tips and strategies for teaching scenario-based learning to clients.

[Find out more here.](#)



PAVE Prevention NGO CSW67 Forum Parallel Event

Thursday, March 9th, 8:30a.m. EST

PAVE Prevention CEO Arlene Limas will present on How to Create Healthy & Safe Workplaces during the UN Commission on the Status of Women.

*"Imagine the potential of an empowered individual and safer workplaces."
—Arlene Limas*

You can register to attend virtually on Zoom [here](#) or sign up for the event in NYC [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:

