



September 2023—Issue No. 21

# Association Newsletter

Empowering Members To Empower Us All

## In This Issue:

.....  
A Note from  
Marketing Lead  
Tasha Ina Church

Association News

ESD Happenings  
Worldwide

Stay Connected!



## Self-Care is **SELF-DEFENSE**

September is Self-Care Awareness Month, which seems like a perfect time to reiterate a core concept in Empowerment Self-Defense (ESD): Self-defense is much more than physical techniques; it is a holistic violence prevention methodology committed to the well-being of the whole self.

Self-care and empowerment self-defense are intimately intertwined. In fact, one might even argue that self-care is a form of self-defense, as it encourages us to practice listening to the body and caring for its needs and boundaries, foundational components of an ESD framework for living.

If we move beyond the Instagrammable self-care of yoga, spa days and smoothies (not that there is anything wrong with those!), we come to a broader definition: self-care means cultivating resilience by knowing and honoring our individual needs.

### **Can we expand our understanding of self-defense AND self-care to include:**

- Eating food that makes us feel good and healthy?
- Setting boundaries on the kind of language or discussions we want around us?
- Caring for our bodies with the right personal balance of rest and movement?
- Listening to our heart and spending our time, energy and attention accordingly?

How do you integrate self-care and ESD? Tell us! Email: [hello@esdprofessionals.org](mailto:hello@esdprofessionals.org).

# A NOTE FROM IYÉMOTE / TASHA INA CHURCH

My Dear ESD Family,

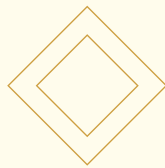
Aloha. Sad tidings. I am so sorry I could not be with those of you who gathered in New York in August. I live in Lahaina, and just weeks ago, my town was burnt to ash.

I am heartbroken, and ... I remind myself, I am ESD. Grieving is okay. Self-care is okay, allowed, and embraced. And, taking action is what we do. We challenge the status quo, ask questions and focus on seeking answers.

The first two weeks of August were the best and the worst of my life. I received my indigenous name from the Stó:lō Nation, my partner's and my family had our first joint family vacation, and I taught the Puyallup Tribe and Top Model Boot Camp.

The Stó:lō Nation named me Iyémote = Strives for Empowerment.

I felt on top of the world. However, every time you reach the top of a pinnacle you must go down to start climbing up again. It felt like a rollercoaster; I couldn't put into words the reality of what was happening.



My partner lost his livelihood, I lost the physical locations where I taught. The West Side is shut down to most non-residents. The unknowns are stacked against us.

Coming back to Lahaina and handing out care packages to those in need who have been displaced or lost everything has been surreal. I keep working to register that my town is gone. However, being here, I realize the true importance of the work that we do. I am grateful to have my ESD skills that apply so well to things like psychological first aid ... for me, loved ones, friends, and neighbors.

What is so comforting is that our ESD training helps us think outside the box. It helps us think critically and act fast. We learn from our adversity and from that comes resilience unforeseen. I love this movement. I love empowerment self-defense. It is my career and my life outside of my family, friends, and Ohana.

There is limitless potential in this work, and we are all capable of so much. ESD professionals are the heroes and sheroes in our communities, the ones who have the capacity to create great change. I am so proud to know you all. Sending love! Be bold, be brave, and be bad\*sses to create the ripple effect in your communities that will change the world.

And so, my dear friends, I was needed here. I am so grateful for the support from the Association team and Samantha in the wake of this tragedy, but am so sad to have missed you all. I wish I could have been there with you to partake in supporting next steps for us our ESD community. I look forward to the next opportunity for reunion and meeting ESD peers for the first time—if not sooner, at the Association conference in Costa Rica this April.

Warmly,  
Iyémete/Tasha  
Strives for Empowerment

*Tasha Ina Church, Founder, [ElleLiveAction](#) and  
Team Lead, Marketing & Social Media, Association of ESD Professionals*



## A NOTE FROM THE ASSOCIATION

*The Association will be making a donation to families affected by the fires on Maui. In case you would like to do the same, below are some options, verified by the County of Maui.*

- [Hawaii Community Foundation's Maui Strong Fund](#)
- [Maui United Way's Fire and Disaster Relief Fund](#)

## ASSOCIATION NEWS



### Announcing our Keynote Speakers for the Association's First Annual Conference in Costa Rica!

#### Early Bird Pricing Available

We are thrilled to announce our two keynote speakers for our First Annual Conference in Costa Rica in April, 2024. [Aparna Rajawat](#) and [Domtila Chesang](#) will be joining us from India and Kenya respectively to share their unique experiences and insights working in violence prevention and women's empowerment.

Aparna Rajawat is a renowned self-defense trainer and martial arts champion who founded Pink Belt Mission to create awareness for a balanced society in which everyone is respected and treated equally.

Domtila Chesang is a full-time women's right activist who, through her community-based organization I\_Rep Foundation, seeks to end female genital mutilation (FGM), child marriage, and other harmful cultural practices.

*The Association of ESD Professionals First Annual 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. It 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. [Register here.](#)*

# ASSOCIATION NEWS

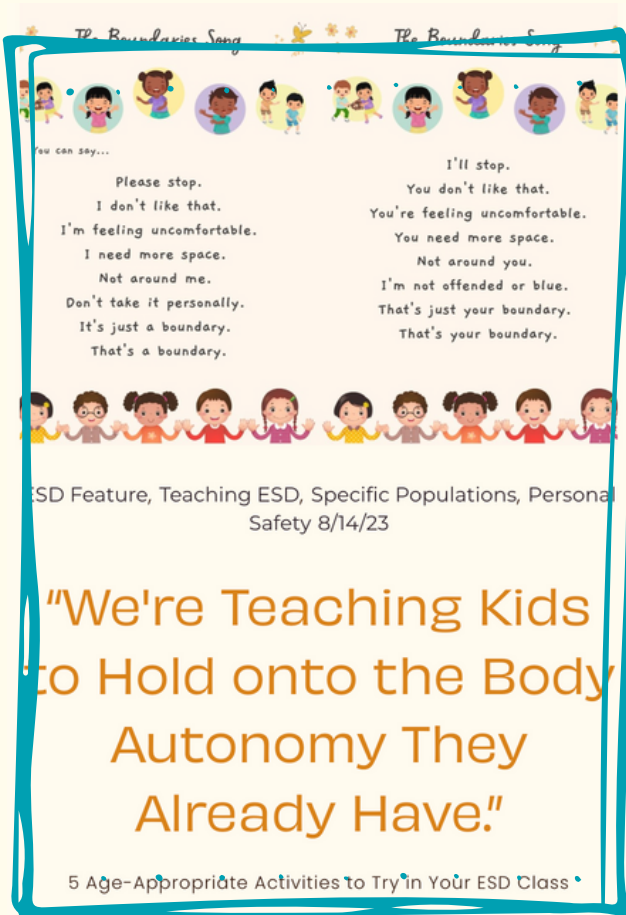
## Credentialing in 2023

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!

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

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



## Body Autonomy for Kids

[Read our latest blog!](#)

*Our job as ESD instructors isn't to help kids develop a sense of bodily autonomy. Rather, it is to help kids hold on tight to the sense of bodily autonomy—and the innate ability to defend it—they already have, while helping them develop more mature and age-appropriate ways of expressing themselves."*

—Melissa Fragiadaki

[Our latest blog](#) is a wonderful read by guest author and Association member Melissa Fragiadaki. We recommend it!

\*\*\*

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

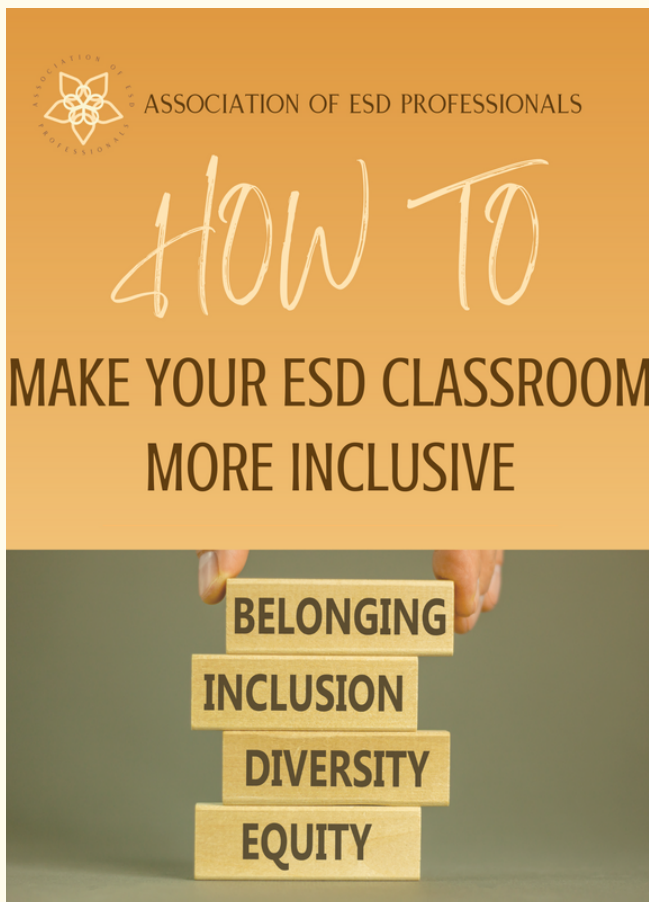
# ASSOCIATION NEWS

## 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 Make Your ESD Classroom More Inclusive

### Our Featured How-To Guide of the Month

Equity and inclusion aren't just talking points; they are foundational concepts upon which to build a truly transformative empowerment self-defense movement.

*If you want to bring more equity and inclusivity into your ESD practice, but aren't sure where to begin, this guide is for you. We will explore how to adapt ESD to suit different cultures, abilities, and needs, allowing participants to guide their own growth.*

Visit our [resources page](#) to download this and all our How-To Guides.

# 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

Thursday, September 28th

This month's virtual office hours will feature guest expert and ESD professional Linda Štucbartová. We will discuss the potential of operating an ESD project as a social enterprise, as well as how to find support and build partnerships.

Learn more and register for our September Office Hours [here](#).

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

A graphic for "OFFICE HOURS LAST THURSDAY OF THE MONTH". It features the Association of ESD Professionals logo, an illustration of a woman with glasses holding a tablet, and a chalkboard with text. At the bottom, it says "ASSOCIATION OF ESD PROFESSIONALS GROWING EMPOWERMENT SELF-DEFENSE" with a graphic of raised hands.

**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

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](mailto:hello@esdprofessionals.org).



#SafeOnline

**SAFE ONLINE**  
**2023 OPEN CALL**

**Pillar A**  
**Networks & Systems**  
USD 6M, up to USD 750K per proposal

**Pillar B**  
**Research & Data**  
USD 1.5M, up to USD 250K per proposal

**Pillar C**  
**Technology Tools**  
USD 2.5M, up to USD 300K per proposal

## \$10 Million Global Open Call

### Safe Online Seeking Proposals

Have a solution to tackle online child sexual exploitation and abuse (through ESD...)? This could be an incredible opportunity to get funded and have a huge impact on children's online safety through ESD programming, tech, advocacy or research.

Learn more and apply [here](#).

## Teaching Safety to Parents

### Jade Rayne interviewed on "Real Parenting Stories"

Member Jade Rayne was recently featured in an interview with the host of the [Real Parenting Stories podcast](#). She discussed how parents and caregivers can support children in expressing their feelings, ensuring they feel safe coming to talk to us about anything. We can all empower children with simple but important self-defense skills. Getting these ideas into conversations about parenting space is a big win for ESD!



Listen on Spotify [here](#)!



# ESD WORLDWIDE



Association Communications Manager Toby Israel at the Incubator.

Photo Credit: Power of XYZ

## Reporting Out – ESD Incubator, Training, & VPEC in New York

### Hope for the future.

From August 20–26, Association team members Samantha Waterman, Sheila Watson, Modupe Poku, Qwan Smith and Toby Israel joined approximately 80 participants from 28 countries participating in the ESD Incubator, Teacher Trainings, and VPEC for an intense, inspiring, dare we say life-changing experience we would be hard pressed to put into words. However, we will do our best to share insights and action steps with all of you in the coming weeks and months.

### A few first takeaways:

- We are stronger—so, so much stronger—together. This movement, with all of us behind it, will become truly unstoppable.
- You've got to dream big... and then narrow it down and make a real plan.
- The more we listen—to one another, and beyond our circles—the more we learn.
- A successful movement works in all directions (ground up, top down, inside out, outside in). If we're moving, we're growing in the right direction.

Can't wait to gather again in person? Be sure to register for the Association's First Annual Conference (Costa Rica, April 2024) [here](#).

## ESD WORLDWIDE



### **XCEPT: Call for EOI**

**Deadline: September 13th**

XCEPT is commissioning research on how the transnational dimensions of conflict interact with issues related to women and girls. Building on the UK Women, Peace and Security National Action Plan 2023-2027, XCEPT has a particular interest in research on women and girls that can contribute to several issues, including "Preventing, reducing, or responding to Gender-Based Violence (GBV) in cross-border conflict environments."

Find more details and submit your Expression of Interest [here](#).

---

### **SVRI Consultancy: Last Call**

**Closing Date: September 24**

Request for proposals: Wellbeing, Self and Collective Care Consultancy to support the SVRI Forum 2024 in South Africa. Preference will be given to a team living and working in Cape Town, South Africa but global applications will be considered.



To learn more 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:

