



What Should I Charge for my ESD Services?

One of the most basic questions any new business must determine is “How much do I charge for my services?” As members of the Empowerment Self Defense community, we know that this decision can be loaded with doubt, anxiety, and stress. If you never had a business before, you are not alone. Many ESD professionals come to their craft from other professions and are inexperienced with business basics and figuring out what to charge is one of the most basic of basics. Never fear, help is here! The first step is to remember that the services you provide, that you and your work, have value. The work you do and the time you dedicate to it, your students and clients, and the ESD movement is worthy of compensation. As you help others to become emotionally and physically empowered, we are here to help you become financially empowered!

IS IT RIGHT TO CHARGE FOR ESD?

Let's begin by answering this question about whether it is right to charge for ESD. The answer is YES. However, that does not mean that everyone should have to pay for their classes and it does not mean that everyone should have to pay the same amount for their classes. But there are plenty of people with the ability to pay, and if you want to be compensated for the work you do, it's worth thinking about teaching people with varying abilities to pay. Teach the class at the shelter for free. Teach the housewives of Newport Beach the going rate. In Newport Beach.

Have you been offering free classes, but you have felt resentful, or like you are a martyr over time? If you are offering free classes, what are the benefits? We aren't saying, "Don't offer free classes." Of course, we get it if it feels good to touch another life and support them in their empowerment journey. However, we challenge you to think about the benefits beyond the selfless act of helping someone learn the valuable tools, strategies, and choices surrounding violence prevention. Maybe you run a martial arts school, and it is the opportunity to get people in the door. However,

teaching Empowerment Self-Defense is an opportunity to enhance someone's life who may not be a martial artist. They may work a 9-5, have multiple children, multiple jobs, and may have other responsibilities that come before a weekly martial arts class, and yet, they still want to feel safe in the skin they are in. Several studies have been done on offering free services vs. paid, and you can ask yourself this question. Have you ever looked at investing in something, and you saw one person offer it for an extreme discount that made you suspicious? In the same token, another person had a higher price point but showed the benefits and qualifications and justified the price in a way that sounded appealing? Have you ever offered a free class, and no one showed up? How did that make you feel? It can be disheartening, even devastating for those of us out there where this has happened. You may even want to quit.

Now, have you ever offered a paid class after the no-shows and viola, people magically appeared? When you put a dollar sign next to a training, you show its value. Think about it. You are offering life-saving skills. People pay ridiculous amounts of money on adventures, excursions, health and wellness, hair cuts, a deluxe movie experience, their nails (and you know that last one is true). You can't put a price on the power that you feel when you know that you are capable of launching someone across the room or understanding that the power in the palm of your hand is mighty enough to break a board. ESD is about empowerment. Understanding that you have value in what you teach is power.

If you are having trouble wrapping your head around charging for your services, worried about the ability or willingness of your target market to pay, know that there are multiple ways to approach this, other ways to deliver programming and get paid. You could approach an organization that already serves your target market and look into offering them trainings for their clients. Did you know that some nonprofits have those benefits or services written into their budgets? Or, you could approach corporations about sponsoring your workshops or trainings so that you can provide your services on a sliding scale.

THE GOING RATE

But how do you determine what your services are worth? Of course, ESD courses could be valued as priceless because of their potential to prevent violence and change lives. But in the real world, you'll need to assign a value to your instruction or other services to determine what to charge. Do a self-assessment—What is your skill level? How long and how often have you been practicing ESD? What certifications, credentials, and continuing education have you achieved? Have you just completed your training and are just starting out? Don't forget to factor in the teaching you've done while training! Your ESD level will give you a baseline for comparison.

Next, compare your skill and experience level to others. What are other ESD professionals with similar skill sets charging for their services? And what are these charges in your area or in areas with similar costs of living? Collect as many examples as you can. Now we are getting close to a number!

INTANGIBLY TANGIBLE

Once you know an approximation of ESD services in your practice area, you can begin to think of investing in yourself with what we'll call intangible assets. As a new ESD professional looking to set up shop, you may want to offer a free introductory class to get people interested in your ESD practice.

Networking with other similar businesses such as local martial arts studios and gyms could produce mutually beneficial relationships. As mentioned above, partnering with local businesses, nonprofits and community and governmental entities that would benefit from ESD programs that you can offer is a fantastic way to expand your practice.

It is also always a great idea to continue learning and achieving new goals as an ESD professional by joining ESD professional organizations ([Samantha, can we list several other organizations here like Impact personal safety or ESD Global?](#)) These organizations can be a treasure trove of valuable information and opportunity to build relationships. More than likely, if you have a question about starting an ESD program, someone has been there before and has the answer. It is so exciting and a little scary starting a new venture, but ESD is a community of empowerment. Utilize those intangibles and turn them into tangibles for your ESD program.

So, do a self-assessment of where you are as an ESD professional so you can establish a baseline for comparison. Then compare! Find out what the range of ESD services are offered in your area and what others are charging for them. Then decide on a number that works for you and your ESD business.

Market and network to get yourself out there in the ESD community. If you think offering a promotion for your services or partnering up with another business in the community works for you then go for it! And finally, always keep learning and evolving as an ESD professional while bringing the power of ESD to others. Good luck!

Do you have questions or other topics you are interested in? Please contact us at info@ESDProfessionals.org.