

ESD METHOD™ – 12-HOUR COURSE LEARNING OBJECTIVES

MODULE 1 — The Empathy Spectrum (2 Hours)

After completing this module, students will be able to:

1. Define affective, cognitive, somatic, and energetic empathy.
2. Describe the six Empathy Spectrum Disorder (ESD) subtypes and their core characteristics.
3. Identify common behavioral and somatic markers associated with each subtype.
4. Explain how empathy dysregulation develops across the lifespan.
5. Complete and interpret an ESD Self-Inventory to determine personal empathy patterns.

MODULE 2 — Trauma, Touch, and Empathy (2 Hours)

After completing this module, students will be able to:

1. Describe the relationship between trauma, touch, and empathy dysregulation.
2. Explain the polyvagal model as it relates to emotional and somatic regulation.
3. Recognize signs of hyperempathic flooding and hypoempathic shutdown during a massage session.
4. Identify early nervous system cues that indicate client overwhelm or dissociation.
5. Apply at least three therapist containment strategies to maintain a regulated treatment environment.

MODULE 3 — The ESD Method™ Treatment Framework (2 Hours)

After completing this module, students will be able to:

1. Define the ESD Treatment Triad: Somatic Regulation, Empathic Containment, and Attuned Boundaries.
2. Explain how empathy subtypes influence a client's expectations, communication style, and treatment needs.
3. Match session pacing strategies to specific ESD subtypes.
4. Distinguish scope-appropriate "treatment" from psychological intervention.
5. Develop a basic session plan using the ESD Method™ principles.

MODULE 4 — Touch Techniques by Subtype (2 Hours)

After completing this module, students will be able to:

1. Demonstrate touch rhythm and pacing adjustments appropriate for each ESD subtype.
2. Modify pressure and speed to downshift hyperempathic clients safely.
3. Implement techniques that support sensation awareness for cognitively dominant clients.
4. Apply awakening-style touch strategies for hypoempathic or shutdown clients without causing distress.
5. Analyze how the therapist's own empathy subtype influences their touch quality and client interactions.

MODULE 5 — Communication and Boundaries (2 Hours)

After completing this module, students will be able to:

1. Identify common boundary challenges associated with empathy dysregulation.
2. Recognize signs of countertransference rooted in empathy imbalance.
3. Use attuned communication strategies to redirect emotional spillover.
4. Apply subtype-specific scripts for difficult or dysregulated client interactions.
5. Maintain professional and ethical boundaries within the ESD Method™ framework.

MODULE 6 — The ESD Session Flow (2 Hours)

After completing this module, students will be able to:

1. Conduct a subtype-informed intake using ESD-based questioning.
2. Adapt treatment strategies and pacing when signs of distress appear mid-session.
3. Outline a full session flow for each ESD subtype, including warm-up, main work, and integration.
4. Identify red flags that require session modification, referral, or termination.
5. Provide subtype-specific aftercare recommendations that promote continued regulation.
6. Successfully complete a final assessment demonstrating understanding of the ESD Method™ principles.