

Editing personal trauma stories: Practical tips for limiting the emotional cost

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Belinda is a freelance book editor with degrees in Communication and Theology, a background in news journalism, and more than twenty years' experience editing non-fiction and memoir for specialist publishers and self-publishers, including clinical psychologists. Her blog for writers and editors at smallbluedog.com receives many thousands of visits per month.



Date: Wednesday 5 June 2019

Time: 6:00 pm for drinks and nibbles with a 6.30 pm start

Venue: Ashgrove Library, 87 Amarina Ave, Ashgrove 4060

Cost: \$12 members; \$17 non-members; QWC members at EdsQ member rates – bring your membership receipt to the event. Books will be on sale by cash or card.

Dinner: Macho Macho, 498 Waterworks Rd, Ashgrove
Everyone is welcome – we're friendly!

It seems everyone is writing a memoir, and many of them contain various kinds of trauma stories. The emotional cost of telling and editing these stories sometimes takes both author and editor by surprise.

Belinda Pollard had a unique opportunity for 'continuous improvement' in her management strategies when she edited a book of ten mini-memoirs for a domestic violence charity, suffered for it ... and then they scheduled another two books!

Belinda will share tips from what she learned (the hard way) about the benefits of planning ahead and taking the potential emotional impact seriously. No, we don't have to become psychoanalysts, but we can take simple steps that help both ourselves and our clients, including:

- practising personal disciplines such as exercising, getting good nutrition and protecting our sleep
- expanding the schedule to limit daily exposure to the manuscript
- 'tricking ourselves' into thinking differently about the story conveyed
- being aware of how past trauma might affect our client's interactions with us and their responses to our editing suggestions.

Editing trauma stories can be hard work, but when we manage the project wisely, the outcome can be surprisingly meaningful and even healing.