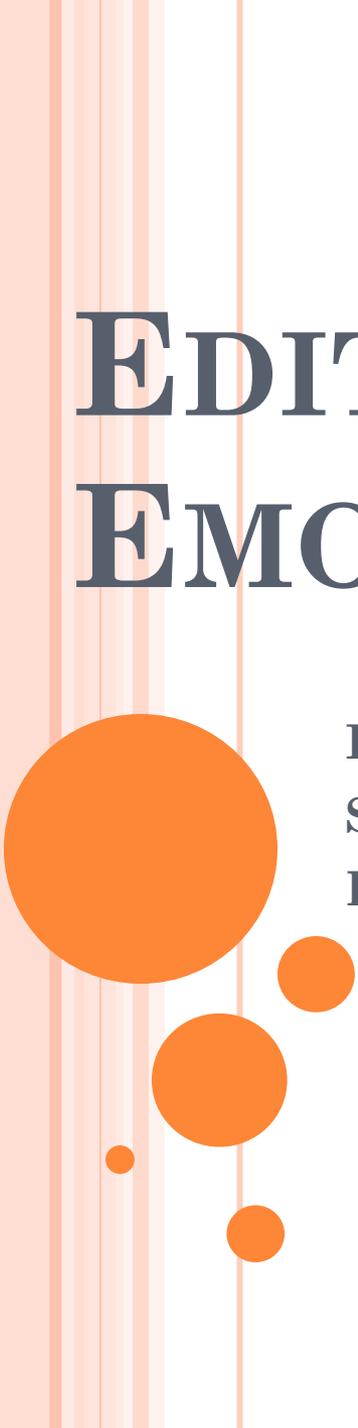


# EDITING AND EMOTIONAL LABOR



Isabella Furth  
Sarah Grey  
Heather Saunders

# WHAT IS EMOTIONAL LABOR?

- Manipulating or modulating one's own feelings to meet the requirements of a job or to make an experience positive for customer or colleague.

*[Emotional] labor requires one to induce or suppress feeling in order to sustain the outward countenance that produces the proper state of mind in others.... This kind of labor calls for a coordination of mind and feeling, and it sometimes draws on a source of self that we honor as deep and integral to our individuality.*

—Arlie Hochschild, *The Managed Heart*



# WHAT IS EMOTIONAL LABOR?

- Relationship work: Caretaking others' emotions, making sure relationships are sustained, managing social capital.

*At its most basic level ... emotional labour is saying to another human being, “you matter. I will take my time to show you that you matter.”*

—Posted to Metafilter thread, “Where’s My Cut?”  
On Unpaid Emotional Labor,” July 16, 2015.



# WHAT IS EMOTIONAL LABOR?

- Often goes unrecognized and uncompensated.

*[As in physical labor] ...the worker can become estranged or alienated from an aspect of self—either the body or the margins of the soul—that is used to do the work.*

—Arlie Hochschild, *The Managed Heart*



# EDITORS DO EMOTIONAL LABOR ALL THE TIME!

- We see it in:
  - Editorial persona
  - Intimacy of editor/author relationship
  - Power imbalances
- It is a useful tool, but we need to:
  - Recognize it
  - Consent to it
  - Set up appropriate boundaries around it
  - Be compensated for it



# AREAS WHERE EMOTIONAL LABOR CAN SURFACE

- Specific fields (*memoir, fiction, academia*)
- Content (*trauma, medical, forensic*)
- Levels of editing and related tasks (*developmental, copy, indexing*)



# THE EMOTIONAL ARC OF A PROJECT

- Preventing and managing client drama
  - Create template responses for difficult conversations
  - Use precise, specific language that manages expectations
- Anticipate and plan for recurring patterns
  - Pre-launch panic
  - Academic calendar ups and downs
- Establishing end-of-project steps and contact
  - Set expectations of closure



# SETTING & MAINTAINING BOUNDARIES

- Project contracts set out fees, dates, scope of work
- What's not in the contract?
  - Your availability
  - Your relationship with the client
  - Your emotional labor

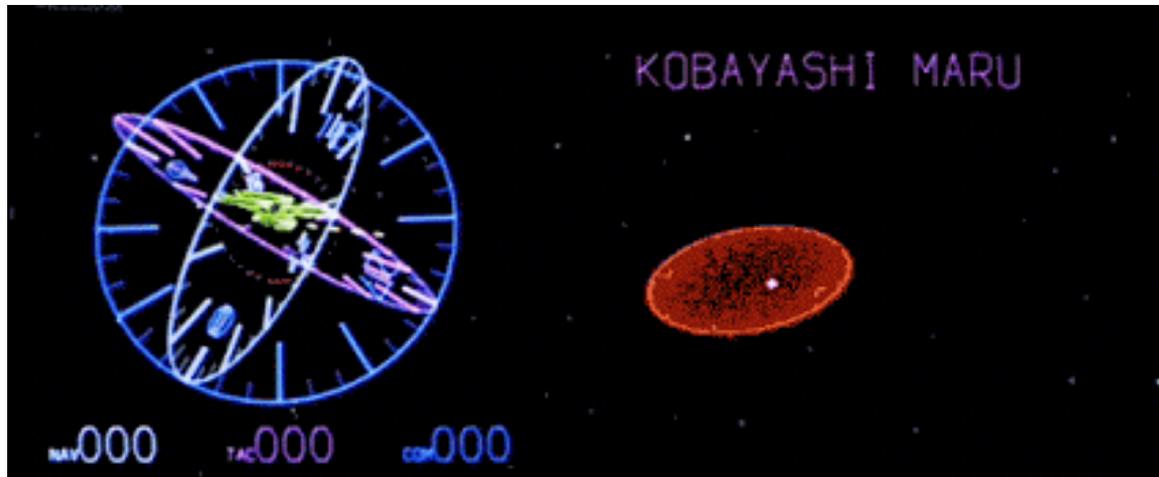


# BOUNDARY PUSHERS

- The new best friend
- The would-be lover
- The therapy patient
- The VIP

What do they want?

- Your time
- Your energy
- Your attention
- Your labor



# PROTECT YOURSELF

- Your time and energy are your income and well-being.
- Set a clear social-media policy.
- Use written agreements for formal aspects of a project.
- Set client expectations from the start.
- Firing the client is the nuclear option.



# GENDERED EXPECTATIONS IN EDITING

- Your gender vs. the gendered expectations of the profession
- Marginalized identities play into expectations—especially race
- Unlearning gendered behaviors and training
- Leveraging privilege to create space for peers



# THE ART OF THE QUERY

- Emotional labor arises during the query process when:
  - We try to manage the author's reaction to the question/revision
  - We have to balance our position as an authority with some clients' biases
  - We have to confront a client about the content



# THE ART OF THE QUERY

- How to frame queries
  - Shift perspective to the reader and provide solutions
  - Remain professional, precise, and specific
  - Explain the query process as a “revision dialogue”
- When you need to call out a client
  - Is the content incorrect, hurtful, or disrespectful?
  - Provide relevant expert sources/resources



# NEGOTIATING RATES AND SALARIES

- Include value of emotional labor in service fees.
  - What is this project requiring beyond others?
  - Quantify potential lost time/energy
- Use more neutral language.
  - “We know people have emotional responses to certain words”
  - Words can assign responsibility to tasks
- Negotiate to ensure all needs are met.



# RESILIENCE AND SELF-CARE

- Learn to recognize your difficult/triggering content.
  - What topics could place an additional burden on you?
  - What subjects hit “too close to home?”
- Remember it’s a professional relationship and a job.
  - Search for a balance between passion for the work and ability to detach
- Create structure to recover if dealing with emotional labor overload.
  - Have “an escape plan” and a previously established support system in place
  - Monitor your emotions, work habits, etc. to reduce strain
  - Prepare others that you may have to reconsider other commitments



# THANK YOU!

- **Isabella Furth**, Ph.D. (@IsaFurth), is the owner of Bluefish Editorial Services. She specializes in academic writing in the humanities and social sciences and works extensively with memoirs, biographies, textbooks, and nonfiction. [www.bluefisheditorial.com](http://www.bluefisheditorial.com)
- **Sarah Grey** (@GreyEditing), owner of Grey Editing, is a Robinson Prize laureate. She provides copyediting, developmental editing, proofreading, and indexing services. She writes and teaches about editing and language. [www.greyediting.com](http://www.greyediting.com)
- **Heather E. Saunders** (@H\_E\_Saunders), owner of Just the Write Type Editing, is a proofreader and STM editor. With an education in and passion for the sciences, she uses her journalistic and editorial expertise to address even the most complex and technical subjects with precision and clarity. She is an ACES board member. <http://www.justthewritetype.com>

