My intention was to create a memoir for survivors to be able to use as a tool in their recovery. In order to craft the memoir to the best of it’s abilities I planned on researching through reading books that were about how trauma affects a person, how to write memoirs, and examples of memoirs themselves. I also planned on using this as a tool for my own recovery and as a practice run on what I want to share and keep private when I’m working as a sexual assault nurse examiner (SANE) in the future. With the production of this memoir I am able to spread messages to survivors in hopes of sending hope to others.

In the past ten weeks, I have written over one hundred pages with four rounds of editing, including rounds of reading out loud to myself and my advisor Suellyn Henke. In terms of research I have read eighteen books in total, with seven of them being about trauma and healing from trauma, six being examples of memoirs that have been published, and five of them being how to write a memoir. After finishing each book I have written a reflection on how it connected things or sparked things for me to write about in my own writing. I have also written weekly reflections on how I was doing mentally with all that was going on while rewriting some difficult scenes and reading some potentially triggering readings.

Overall, I think in these past ten weeks I made more progress that I was expecting to make but I definitely didn’t achieve all my goals that I had set for myself this summer. I wanted to get to the 120 page mark for my memoir, but personally I think the quality of the pages that I do have is worth coming a little bit short of the page goal I set. I didn’t fill any of the pages with nonsense or irrelevant moments and i think that beats getting to the page goal. I also didn’t get in as many rounds of editing that I hoped to get but I also didn’t originally plan to go into such detailed editing the few times that i did so i think that was a better way to go about it concerning time and quality of the writing.

When it comes to my original reading goal of eight books, I went above that by adapting my reading list to what I found in my research. While researching, I got the advice to read memoirs which is something that I didn’t think of and with that and the fact of how much the readings have shaped my work I added more books to my reading list with having gotten through a total of eighteen this summer.

I plan on continuing this research in the fall and if I’m not able to for any reason I will for sure continue next summer. I am thinking about making this my thesis possibly due to it being such a personal topic and the amount of time put into it. In the spring I will be presenting at Elkin Isaac on what I have done so far. When I have finished this memoir I would like to publish it for more people to gain from this project.

I really believe that the value of this project will be spread to more of the audience that will gain from having received the messages written in this memoir. I will be reaching more people that I would be able to just being a SANE. I also believe that the messages inside my memoir can be applied to more than survivors, which this platform of a memoir will allow me to be able to reach out to that audience. I want to be able to impact as many people as possible and having this memoir will allow me to open up the pool of people that I will be able to share with.

This process has allowed me to grow as a person and understand my place in recovery more than I had previously. Writing this memoir has allowed me to heal in ways that weren’t originally in my path such as understanding the science behind PTSD and the effects of trauma and also hearing others stories as well. I also gained a lot of insights about the whole process of recovery and the biological aspects that will help me become a better SANE in the future.

I would like to thank the Orpha Leiter Irwin Fellowship for supporting this project and helping it become a possibility. I would also like to thank my amazing advisor Suellyn Henke for helping step by step through this long process. I would also like to thank the whole FURSCA committee for making this a possibility and agreeing to support this project.