2016 GEORGIA VICTIM ASSISTANCE ACADEMY CURRICULUM

1. **The Art of Helping:** Examines the roles of advocates, explores their values. Discusses effective communication skills (e.g., engaging, building rapport, listening, attending, reflecting, and interpreting body language) and conducting interviews. Case records management, ethics, confidentiality, advocate privilege, collaboration and community education, creative networking, and developing local resources.

2. **History of Victim Rights:** Explains the history of the victims' rights movement, including significant legislation (e.g., mandated reporting, access for forensic exams/interviews, supervised visitation at Child Advocacy Centers, the Prison Rape Elimination Act of 2003, Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children, and other recent changes (e.g., Title IX and Clery Act on campus crimes, etc.). Introduces societal factors affecting family violence, recent events and trends in violence and victimization, and the dangers of vicarious trauma.

3. **Overview of Victimization:** Discusses the impacts of crime on victims and their families. Systems of social services, justice, faith and school supports. Highlights the dynamics of crime and victimization: victims' rights and the barriers victims face, safety matters, and basic expectations of advocacy work. Discusses confidentiality and advocates' privilege. Using local resources and service networks, and the importance of collaboration. How to use the CJCC and the United Way 211 Resource Guides. Recent developments (e.g., terrorism, power infidelities of law enforcement, campus responses to sexual assault, role of advocates during natural disasters). Cyber-stalking; human trafficking; immigration; elderly and disabled victims; LGBTQ victims; and the needs of crime victims with mental health and addiction issues; blind, deaf and hearing impaired victims; animal cruelty; etc.

4. **The Criminal Justice System and You:** Identifies the major components of our justice system, and the roles of its major players. Discusses the interactions of teams – and how collaboration helps victims. Walks a case through criminal proceedings from arrest through sentencing. Compares victims' with offenders' rights, civil and criminal law, and clarifies mandated reporting. Discusses the roles of law enforcement, prosecutors and the courts. Explores "best practices," especially the use of Temporary Protection Orders. Explains trauma-informed services/interagency protocols across the lifespan, poly-victimization response, rape kit backlogs, new DNA protocols.

5. **Diversity Foundations, Collaboration, & Activities:** An experiential exercise identifies barriers to quality advocacy. Expands cultural competencies. Discusses the definitions and challenges facing under-served communities in Georgia, identifies the types of barriers victims face, and discusses the laws supporting diversity: cultural competency (a "new world"), immigration, documentation for immigration civil cases, transnational abandonment, international kidnapping, specialized victims, LGBTQ victims. Discusses collaboration and offers a panel on the challenges faced by vulnerable populations.

6. **Crisis Intervention & Trauma Assessment:** Presents key concepts of trauma and crisis – assessment of victim needs, the medical and health hazards of trauma, the emotional and social aftereffects of trauma, the correlation of victimization with PTSD and substance abuse. Discusses effective interventions with people in trauma and identifying people who need a referral for mental health services. Applies these concepts to one's own practice. Poly-victimization responses, mental health aspects of victimization, vicarious trauma and self-care, risk assessment.

7. **Managing Stress and Self-Care:** Explores the unique sources of stress that comes with working with victims of crime. Recognizing signs of stress and cumulative stress, healthy and unhealthy coping skills in victims, as well as in ourselves. Discusses approaches to conflict management, problem-solving, stress management, asking for help, using debriefing services or support from clinicians and stress-reduction.

8. **Victim Compensation:** Explains how victims benefit from six programs of the Crime Victims Emergency Fund: the Crime Victims Compensation Program, Officers Initiative Program, DUI Memorial Sign Program, Forensic Interview Program, and the Forensic Medical Examination Program. More on the Crime Victims' Bill of Rights. Helping crime victims access resources to ease their financial burden, or honor a loved one.

9. **Overview of Victimizations:** Introduces Tier B's material on the types of victimizations: The incidence and prevalence of child victimization, and the consequences of witnessing abuse. Services for child victims and the benefits of interdisciplinary approaches. How to recognize sexual offenders. Exposes rape myths and explores their effects on victim assistance. Describes the incidence of sexual assault, and the range of services available in Georgia (including the importance of SART). Dynamics of domestic violence, pertinent law, and best practice approaches to assisting victims of family violence and stalking. Types of homicide in Georgia, and requirements for the death penalty. Homicide and the "new normal," and DUI homicide. Indicators of elder abuse and exploitation, how to report elder victimization and how APS protects elderly victims. NOVA's criteria for widespread trauma, and events that are more typical in 21st Century America; proper approaches to community crisis response.

10. **Elderly Victims:** Georgia code on elder abuse, neglect, and exploitation "ANE" (e.g., financial abuse). Indicators and impacts of ANE on elders, and reporting elder victimization. How the system protects elders through Adult Protective Services and other community resources.

11. **Community Crisis Response:** NOVA's criteria for widespread trauma. Typical community-wide events and recent trends, such as perceived power imbalances with law enforcement, issues of race and identity. Roles of victim advocates during natural disasters, and dialogue about societal factors such as terrorism, interagency provision of trauma-informed services (collaboration).