

## 2023 GCFV Regional Family Violence Training – Trainer Bios

### **Mike Mertz**

Michael H. Mertz is an experienced law enforcement professional with over 20 years investigating crimes of family violence, sexual assault, stalking, and child abuse. Mike is dynamic presenter with more than 20 years of experience training law enforcement and other criminal justice professionals on appropriate, victim centered responses to the crimes of family violence, sexual assault, and stalking.

Mike is the owner of C&M Consulting and Professional Training Services LLC in Dublin, Georgia and previously served as the Violence Against Women Program Director for the Georgia Association of Chiefs of Police and Family Violence Division Commander for the Forsyth County Sheriff's Office. He is a certified expert witness on dynamics and investigation of crimes of family violence, sexual assault, stalking, and child abuse. He is a Georgia POST Certified Law Enforcement Officer, Georgia POST Certified Instructor (2001), Certified FLETC "S.T.A.R." instructor (2001), Office of Victims of Crime Certified "Ultimate Trainer" (2005) and is a Southern Baptist Association Ordained Minister (1990).

### **Carolynn Brooks**

Carolynn Brooks is the Family Violence Fatality Review Project Coordinator at the Georgia Commission on Family Violence. Her role involves conducting research, writing reports, and providing technical assistance and training on family violence. Prior to her current position, she has gained experience in various fields, including direct victim services, clinical psychology research, and working in a cooperative medical and psychological practice.

In terms of education, Carolynn graduated with honors from Houghton College, where she earned a degree in Biology. She later pursued a master's degree in Human Development and Family Studies from the University of Rochester. Carolynn received the Mary Ellen Burrell Human Development Award for her dedication to applying human development theory and research into practice during her time at the University.

In addition to her formal accolades, Carolynn has received informal awards that showcase her exceptional abilities. She was honored with the Wonder Woman Award, highlighting her ability to handle complex tasks effortlessly. She also received the Chair of Research Award, which recognizes her commitment to delving deep into the available resources and data to support innovation in addressing family violence in Georgia.

### **Niki Lemeshka**

Niki Lemeshka is the Program Manager at the Georgia Commission on Family Violence. In that capacity she oversees the agency's grant-funded programs and special projects. Prior to her current role, Niki served as the agency's Fatality Review Coordinator where she ran the Georgia Domestic Violence Fatality Review Project, authored reports and provided technical assistance

to communities as they implemented project recommendations. Previously, she worked in direct service at a domestic violence program and in child protective services.

Niki currently serves on the Georgia Commission on Dispute Resolution's Domestic Violence Rules Committee and is an Advisory Board member for the Georgia Violent Death Reporting System of the Georgia Department of Public Health. She has chaired multiple community groups including Georgia's STOP VAWA Training Initiatives Implementation Subcommittee, the Cherokee County Domestic Violence Task Force, and the Blue Ridge Judicial Circuit Fatality Review Team.

Niki holds a Bachelor of Arts from the University of Georgia, a Master of Public Administration from Columbus State University, and a Certified Public Manager credential from the Carl Vinson Institute of Government. She regularly provides training on issues related to family violence and stalking victimization on the state and national levels and is a Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST) Council General Instructor, a Certified Professional Trainer on Stalking Victimization, a QPR Suicide Prevention Gatekeeper Instructor, and is on the faculty of the Georgia Victim Assistance Academy. Niki was a Georgia Women's Policy Institute Fellow (2017-2018) and received Livesafe Resources' Woman of Achievement award in 2023. She is a fan of the Boston Red Sox and other lost causes.