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CLBB News

A newsletter from the Center for Law, Brain & Behavior

February 16, 2021

New Petrie-Flom Senior Fellow in Law and Applied Neuroscience:

Introducing Elyssa Spitzer, JD



The Center for Law, Brain & Behavior and the Petrie-Flom Center at Harvard Law School are excited to announce our Senior Fellow in Law and Applied Neuroscience for 2021-2022: [Elyssa Spitzer, JD](#).

[The Project on Law and Applied Neuroscience](#), launched in 2014, is a collaboration between the Massachusetts General Hospital Center for Law, Brain & Behavior (CLBB) and the Petrie-Flom Center. The collaboration includes a Senior Fellow in residence, public symposia, and an HLS Law and Neuroscience Seminar. The Petrie-Flom Center's fellowship programs are a central component of the Center's mission to promote scholarly inquiry and shape the debates surrounding issues of health law policy, biotechnology, and bioethics.



Elyssa Spitzer, JD, is the fourth Senior Fellow in the [Project on Law and Applied Neuroscience](#), a collaboration between the Center for Law, Brain & Behavior (CLBB) at Massachusetts General Hospital and the Petrie-Flom Center at Harvard Law School.

After graduating from Harvard Law School in 2017, Elyssa led a legal research project surveying U.S. criminal law and developing national performance benchmarks for the criminal justice system as a Senior Legal Researcher at the nonprofit Measures for Justice.

Elyssa then served as a Justice Catalyst Legal Fellow at the Center for Reproductive Rights, where her work focused on developing new legal theories for protecting and advancing reproductive rights and justice.

Elyssa also clerked in the United States District Court for the Eastern District of Louisiana and assists on cases related to police brutality as a volunteer with the Roderick and Solange MacArthur Justice Center's Supreme Court and Appellate Program.

As the Senior Fellow in Law and Applied Neuroscience, Elyssa will conduct original research, mentoring, policy work, and public engagement on legal issues related to uses of force against juveniles. This project will explore what shapes how an officer on the scene perceives and responds to a juvenile or emerging adult suspect, and what those findings indicate about the "objectively reasonable" legal standard. The project aims to bridge the gap between neuroscience and legal doctrine governing excessive force, in order to better inform how the criminal legal system acts upon and perceives juveniles and emerging adults. This research will have

important implications for legal standards governing, and policy measures intending to limit, uses of force.

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