

CLBB News

A newsletter from the Center for Law, Brain & Behavior

Special Focus: Juvenile Justice

January 20, 2020

Upcoming Events



[Implications of Neuroscience in Juvenile and Young Adult Justice](#)

February 12, 2020, 6:00pm - 8:00pm
Foley Hoag, LLP, 115 Seaport Blvd., Boston, MA

Join the Harvard Law School Association of Massachusetts for brief presentations followed by a panel discussion of the implications of neuroscience in juvenile and young adult justice. Topics will include felony murder and joint venture theories, the "cradle to prison" pipeline, and mental disorders and addiction. The event will feature CLBB Assoc. Managing Director [Dr. Robert Kinscherff, PhD, JD](#), Associate Vice President and Faculty in Doctoral Clinical Psychology program at William James College, and CLBB Affiliated Faculty Member [Judge \(Ret.\) Jay Blitzman](#), Lecturer on Law at Harvard Law School, and former First Justice of Massachusetts Juvenile Court (Middlesex Division). The panel will be moderated by Barry White, Esq., President of HLSA of Massachusetts and Former Ambassador to Norway.

[RSVP now!](#)



[The Next Frontier of Neuroscience and Juvenile Justice](#)

February 26, 2020, 12:00pm
Wasserstein Hall, Harvard Law School

Advances in the neuroscientific understanding of the developing brain, including development in emerging adulthood from ages 18 to 25, are only beginning to enter legal cases. Advocates are recognizing that to make a more direct and profound impact, group-averaged neuroscience evidence must be complemented by individualized clinical assessments. In this panel, [Atty. Marsha Levick, JD](#), [Dr. Leah Somerville, PhD](#), and CLBB Assoc. Managing Director [Dr. Robert Kinscherff, JD, PhD](#) will discuss scientific and legal developments, and the new innovations they suggest at the intersection of neuroscience and juvenile justice.

[RSVP now!](#)

This event is part of the [Project on Law and Applied Neuroscience](#), a collaboration between the Center for Law, Brain & Behavior and the Petrie-Flom Center for Health Law Policy, Biotechnology, and Bioethics at Harvard Law School.

Juvenile Justice Leadership

CLBB Leadership and Affiliated Faculty contribute to a wider and better-translated neuroscientific understanding of the adolescent and emerging adult brain.



[Dr. Robert Kinscherff, PhD, JD](#)

Dr. Robert Kinscherff is the Assoc. Managing Director of the MGH Center for Law, Brain, and Behavior, and Faculty in the Doctoral Program in Clinical Psychology (forensic psychology, Concentration in Children and Families of Adversity and Resilience) and Associate Vice President for Community Engagement at William James College. He was also the 2015-2016 Senior Fellow in Law & Applied Neuroscience at CLBB and The Petrie-Flom Center for Health Law Policy, Biotechnology, and Bioethics at Harvard Law School. He is also Senior Associate at the National Center for Mental Health and Juvenile Justice. Dr. Kinscherff has held various government, teaching, professional service, and policy advisory/development positions, reflecting interests in clinical and forensic practice with juvenile and adult offenders, risk assessment and management, ideologically-motivated violence, and the developmental impact of childhood exposures to adversity and trauma.



[Dr. Leah Somerville, PhD](#)

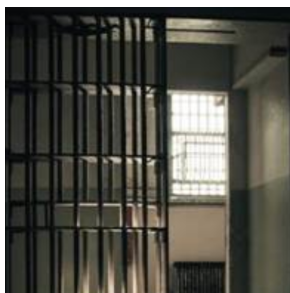
Dr. Leah Somerville is an Affiliated Faculty Member with the MGH Center for Law, Brain, and Behavior, and a Professor of Psychology at Harvard University and Faculty in the Harvard Center for Brain Science. Dr. Somerville's research informs the nature and consequences of adolescent brain development on changes in psychological functioning and well being. This work integrates behavioral, computational, and neuroimaging approaches, and has recently expanded in scale to include conducting the Human Connectome Project in Development, a large NIH-funded study on brain connectivity development. In addition to directing the lab and teaching undergraduate and graduate courses, Dr. Somerville is the Director of Graduate Studies for the Department of Psychology.



[Judge \(Ret.\) Jay Blitzman](#)

Judge (Ret.) Jay Blitzman is a Lecturer on Law at Harvard Law School, and former First Justice of the Massachusetts Juvenile Court, Middlesex Division Prior to his judicial appointment. Judge Blitzman was a founder and the first director of the Roxbury Youth Advocacy Project, a community based interdisciplinary public defenders unit which created the basis for the development of a statewide department. Jay also co-founded Citizen's for Juvenile Justice (CfJJ). As a judge, he continued to present and write on a wide range of juvenile justice and child welfare issues. He is a co-founder of Our RJ, formerly known as the Juvenile Court Restorative Justice Diversion program, and serves on that group's advisory committee.

Past CLBB Work on Juvenile Justice



[Half a Life](#)

November 15, 2016

[Dr. Robert Kinscherff, PhD, JD](#), [Dr. Frank DiCataldo, PhD](#), and Karter K. Reed present their original research findings on outcomes of youth convicted of murder and examine other behavioral science and neurodevelopmental research to frame a conversation about whether or how current law, policy, and practice might be informed by the lives these men lead upon release.

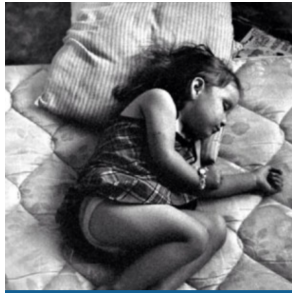
[Boys to Men to Boys](#)

April 13, 2016

Two experts in forensic psychology, law, and juvenile justice policy, [Vincent Schiraldi](#) and [Dr. Robert Kinscherff, PhD, JD](#), discuss the dilemmas posed after the Supreme Court's recent decision to ban mandatory life without possibility of parole for juvenile homicides (Miller v. Alabama, 2012) and then this year to retroactively apply this decision to some 2,000 incarcerated



individuals (Montgomery v. Louisiana, 2016). Watch the video of the event [here](#).



Poverty, Violence, and the Developing Mind

March 24, 2016

Concentrated poverty is on the rise, and an increasing number of children are at risk for exposure to severe violence and dangerous living conditions. What are the implications of trauma exposure for healthy brain development? During this panel event, [Dr. Kerry Ressler, MD, PhD](#) discussed the risks poor, urban environments pose for post-traumatic stress disorder, while [Dr. Charles A. Nelson, PhD](#) discussed the effects of "toxic stress" on early childhood development. Watch the video of the event [here](#).

Raising the Age of Juvenile Court in Connecticut

January 25, 2016

In November of 2015, Connecticut Governor Dannel P. Malloy proposed that his state raise the age of juvenile court jurisdiction through age 20, and that a separate process be developed for handling cases for defendants and offenders under the age of 25. In this event, Gov. Malloy and Senior Research Fellow, Vincent Schiraldi, discussed why Gov. Malloy proposed to raise the age of family court to 21. Watch the video of the event [here](#).



Should the Science of Adolescent Brain Development Inform Legal Policy?

November 13, 2015

Drawing on findings from a 20-year program of work on adolescent decision making and risk taking, [Laurence Steinberg, PhD](#) discussed the Court's rationale in these cases and the role that scientific evidence about adolescent brain development played in its decisions. He concluded that in discussions of adolescents' treatment under criminal law, juveniles' greater amenability to rehabilitation is more important than their diminished culpability. Moreover, he argued that neuroscientific evidence should supplement, rather than supplant, findings from behavioral science. Watch the video of the event [here](#).



From Troubled Teens to Tsarnaev: Promises and Perils of Adolescent Neuroscience and Law

September 28, 2015

CLBB and the Petrie-Flom Center assembled a panel of developmental scientists, clinicians, and legal scholars for a panel discussion examining the implications of developmental neuroscience for law in specific domains including death penalty mitigation for young adults over age 18 such as the Tsarnaev case, a developmentally informed view of Miranda and Competence to Stand Trial for juveniles, trial of youth as adults, and conditions of confinement in juvenile and adult incarceration. Watch the video of the event [here](#).

Juvenile Justice & the Adolescent Brain: Is Healthy Neurodevelopment a Civil Right?

March 12, 2015

CLBB's [Juvenile Justice working group](#) presented a public symposium at the Joseph B. Martin Conference Center of Harvard Medical School bringing together a juvenile court Judge ([Hon. Jay Blitzman](#)), forensic mental health evaluation and juvenile justice policy expert ([Thomas Grisso, PhD](#)), adolescent developmental neuroscientist ([Leah Somerville, PhD](#)), and Department of Youth Services clinician ([Jeanne Tomich, PhD](#)) to elucidate this question. [Robert Kinscherff, PhD, JD](#), forensic psychologist and Senior Associate at the National Center for Mental Health and Juvenile Justice, moderated the conversation. Watch the video of the event [here](#).

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