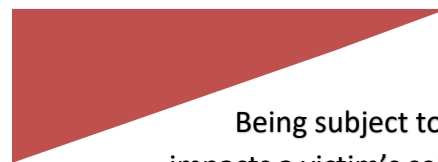


Mental Health Effects

For years the NYPD has targeted majority Muslim communities and Muslim families with unlawful and unconstitutional surveillance. A consequence of such discriminatory treatment is a feeling of hopelessness and exclusion.

Because of this treatment, including Mosques being spied on and local businesses being labeled as “place[s] of concern” just because they have customers of middle-eastern descent, many Muslim New Yorkers have felt the need to self-censor their religious practices. A salient example of this is Muslim students who continue to face severe discriminatory surveillance.

New York’s MSAs have been targeted with informants and undercover officers for as little as organizing a rafting trip, or for having members deemed “politically active”. The result of this discrimination has been self-censorship and disengagement by MSA members. For instance, at Brooklyn College, following disclosure of on-campus surveillance by the NYPD, attendance of Islam Awareness Week events plummeted. One student at CUNY said that she no longer knew who to trust.



**Being subject to surveillance
impacts a victim’s self-perception
and breeds a feeling of otherness.**

Research has shown that government surveillance leads to heightened levels of stress, fatigue and anxiety, fosters distrust, and reduces our sense of personal control. As illustrated by the experiences of Muslim students across the State, being subject to a surveillance regime can impact one’s ability to form healthy and meaningful relationships with other people.

Humans are social creatures, and we depend on feeling free to interact with other humans for our health and happiness. Limiting the social, interactive component of a person’s life will have an undeniably negative effect on their mental health. In addition, a fear of being watched and monitored, usually without being given an explanation as to why, will impact a person’s ability to live their life in an ordinary, healthy way. It will curtail their autonomy to make everyday choices, such as who to speak to or where to go, without fear of adverse repercussions.

Being subject to surveillance impacts a victim’s self-perception, and breeds a feeling of otherness. It is our civic duty to continue fighting for a world where all New Yorkers can live a life free from the mental burden of being a victim of such discrimination.