Countering Violent Extremism / “Don’t Be a Puppet”

Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) began as a program within the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). The program purportedly “aims to address the root causes of violent extremism.” Instead, the CVE program has provided justification for mass surveillance of civilians - especially the infiltration of mosques, Muslim Student Associations, and other Muslim organizations. Now, many agencies within the US government - from student exchange programs to international human rights projects - incorporate some form of CVE programming in their work. CVE encourages or forces Muslims to spy on each other and politicizes any gathering of Muslims as a potential for “radical Islam” and “extremism.”

In 2015, despite protests from many organizations working with Muslim youth - including NQAPIA - the FBI launched their “Don’t Be a Puppet” program under CVE. This program specifically targets high school students. The interactive platform teaches students to see their peers as potential terrorist threats, instead of as young people.

Guiding Questions:
- How does this policy impact the daily lives of LGBTQ API people?
- What stories have you heard from your friends, fam, community that are related to this policy?
- How could this policy change, reform, or transform?