

Solitary Watch

Criminal Justice Issues and Prisoners' Rights

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Starting in the summer of 2022, Solitary Watch is publishing a series of fact sheets offering facts, analysis, and resources on a variety of topics related to the use of solitary confinement in U.S. prisons, jails, and immigrant and juvenile facilities.

Fact Sheet #2 details the far-reaching and even lethal effects of solitary confinement. As the fact sheet states, The negative effects of solitary confinement go far beyond immediate suffering, affect people in all areas of their lives, and can last long after individuals have returned to the general prison population or the free world. However, little attention has been given to the specific collateral consequences of solitary confinement. These consequences include the destruction of family relationships, lasting financial hardship, exclusion from work and educational programming, additional time behind bars, increased recidivism, and even shortened life spans.

The four-page document ([available as a PDF](#)) also includes comprehensive notes and resources.

The first fact sheet in the new series covers how racism in the U.S. punishment system plays out in relation to the use of solitary. As the fact sheet states, The systemic discrimination that has led to the mass incarceration of people of color has replicated itself within solitary confinement. Behind bars, people of color are more likely to be perceived as a threat by staff and more likely to face serious punishments in comparison with their white counterparts. Both factors contribute to racial disparities in the use of solitary confinement.

The fact sheet also documents racial disparities in how mental illness is treated in the punishment system, and in responses to political activism by people of color. The four-page document ([available as a PDF](#)) also includes comprehensive notes and resources.

Accurate information and authentic storytelling can serve as powerful antidotes to ignorance and injustice. We have helped generate public awareness, mainstream media attention, and informed policymaking on what was once an invisible domestic human rights crisis.

Only with your support can we continue this groundbreaking work, shining light into the darkest corners of the U.S. criminal punishment system.

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