

DANGER OF A SINGLE STORY VIEWERS GUIDE

ABOUT THE INSTITUTE FOR FAMILY CENTER FOR LEARNING

The Center is dedicated to empowering child welfare and family service professionals, child and family well-being advocates, and families with holistic training and enrichment opportunities that support family well-being. Users will be able to access engaging content with insights from evidence-based research and compelling storytellers with lived experience navigating systems that impact families most. Learners will engage in courses that feature goals connected to family well-being, self-application reflections, solution-oriented exercises, and downloadable content for deeper learning.

HOW CAN WE HELP?

We would like to support you in any way we can. We also want to hear from you about the actions you take based on what you have learned through this series. Contact us directly at information@instituteforfamily.org

PURPOSE

The Danger of a Single Story lesson plan (DOSS) offers valuable insights on supporting families. Drawing inspiration from renowned author Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's 2009 TED Talk, DOSS analyzes the significance of seeing each family story as an individual and unique situation. Participants will discover parallels between Chimamanda's journey and the challenges they might encounter while supporting diverse families and communities. This session examines the influence of stereotypes on implicit bias and service to families. DOSS prompts participants to identify the origin of their belief systems and implicit biases. Users will gain insight and practical skills for application during engagement with families. As Adichie stated, "The consequence of a single story is it robs people of dignity."

GOALS

DOSS aids child welfare professionals, child advocates, family advocates, and family service professionals in addressing implicit biases during service to families. It equips them with practical strategies to provide personalized attention, guidance, and resources through deliberate, equitable, and culturally sensitive interactions. These strategies ensure that every family they serve receives personalized support through fair and relational interactions.

VIEWER SUGGESTIONS

- As this session covers sensitive topics, feel free to pause and take a moment to prioritize your social and emotional well-being if necessary.
- Please complete the survey provided at the end of the DOSS learning plan. Your feedback helps shape future learning sessions that meet the needs and preferences of child welfare professionals and advocates.

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REFLECTION PROMPTS

There will be opportunities throughout the learning session for intentional reflection. Please use this guide to support your engagement in the Danger of a Single Story learning session.

SEL CHECK-IN

Write about a time you misjudged someone different than you. How did the experience make you feel?

COURSE REFLECTION QUESTION 1

Chimamanda Adichie shared her view of how children are impressionable and vulnerable. How do our actions as social workers and child advocates shape the impressions and influence the vulnerabilities of the children and families we serve?

COURSE REFLECTION QUESTION 2

Chimamanda Adichie reflects upon the unattended consequences she and other children who looked like her face when exposed to American and British books of not knowing that people like her (Black/African/African American) could exist in literature. What are the unintended consequences for children and families if they only view child welfare professionals and advocates as members of a system of surveillance that tears apart families?

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DIVE DEEPER!

COURSE REFLECTION QUESTION 3

Chimamanda Adichie recounted a personal story about her family's 'house boy'. Chimamanda described her perception of him in her home as influenced by her mother's portrayal and the contrast with the reality she encountered when she visited the boy's village. Compare Chimamanda's experience with the 'house boy' to a personal experience. How has the description of a community—as told by child welfare professionals, advocates, or media—differed from your engagement with that community?

COURSE REFLECTION QUESTION 4

Chimamanda Adichie discusses her initial experiences upon arriving at an American university, specifically her roommate's preconceived notions about her before they got to know each other. Consider whether you have held preconceived judgments or assumptions about the families and communities you have served. How have these initial assumptions impacted your interactions with these families and communities, whether positively or negatively?

COURSE REFLECTION QUESTION 5

Chimamanda Adichie discusses how news media and single stories about African countries have influenced the world's perception of its people. Reflect on how similar one-dimensional narratives, stereotypes, and portrayals through news media, television shows, and movies have shaped imagery and single stories about children and families adjacent to the child welfare system or undergoing investigation for child maltreatment or neglect.

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KEEP GOING!

COURSE REFLECTION QUESTION 6

Chimamanda Adichie portrays power as derived from the capacity to create, narrate, and shape the narrative about an individual or a group. Think about any stories you have formed about the people you served. How have these narratives affected your perceptions of them, your ability to listen to them, your capacity to establish connections on their behalf, your communication with them, and your expectations of them?

COURSE REFLECTION QUESTION 7

Chimamanda Adichie emphasizes that single stories lead to stereotypes as well as the issue with stereotypes not being their falsehood, but their incompleteness. They reduce a person's story to their sole story. As a professional and/or advocate, how can you work to mitigate the risks associated with single stories for yourself, your profession, and the families you serve?

MITIGATING THE DANGERS

What are strategies for mitigating the dangers of a single story? Which of these strategies will you be able to integrate into your work today intentionally?

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ALMOST THERE!

REFLECTIONS OF LIVED EXPERIENCE 1

During her reflection, Slam Anderson shared a list of supports that could've helped her mother, Lillie Lee-Williams, avoid child welfare child removals and the separation between Slam's siblings. Reflect on Slam's thoughts and how you support children who feel/felt like her during family transition(s).

REFLECTIONS OF LIVED EXPERIENCE 2

Slam Anderson's reflection on her separation from her siblings shed light on how the experience shaped the narrative she constructed about herself and her family. What strategies can you incorporate in your work to assist youth in care during family transitions while enabling them to develop positive self-narratives and stories that aid in coping during transitions?

REFLECTIONS OF LIVED EXPERIENCE 3

Lillie Lee-Williams, Slam Anderson's mother, shared how she felt as a parent involved with the child welfare system. Reflect on Lillie's experience and how professionals and advocates can support parents with active child welfare system involvement.

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NEXT STEPS

Review these digital resources to dive deeper on the course topic.

Seen Out Loud Podcast by the Institute for Family

<https://bit.ly/IFF-podcast>

Implicit Bias

<https://bit.ly/APA-implicit-bias>

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie

TedTalk

<https://bit.ly/Chimamanda-TedTalk>



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FINAL THOUGHTS!

REFLECTIONS OF LIVED EXPERIENCE 4

As we listen to the reflections of Slam Anderson and her mother Lillie Lee-Williams, reflect upon strategies that could have been integrated to support their family better.

BE THE CHANGE

How do you plan to “be the change” to support the relationships between child welfare professionals, child welfare advocates, children, families, and communities?
