



## Overview

THEME	TIME	MATERIALS	SETUP
 US	60 MINUTES	VIDEO, HANDOUT	CIRCLE OF CHAIRS

**Topic:** Reflection and strategy building for inclusive leadership.

**Audience:** Adults or mature adolescents who work across difference.

**Conceptual Objective:** Participants will understand and appreciate the danger of having only one perspective and internalizing stereotypes. Understand that power lies in who sets the agenda and who gets to tell the story. Learn about two tools: the Danger of a Single Story video and the 1-2-4-All model for reflection.

**Experiential Objective:** Participants will self-reflect on their internalized stories about others, hear some of the stories others believe, and consider how these stories play out in their community work and leadership.

**Facilitator Prep:** Preview the video. Consider how single stories play out in your life, work, and other contexts. Why does this topic matter to you? Why might it be relevant to your specific group?

**Related content:** This workshop would be a good complement to the Public Narrative – Story of Self workshop.

**Materials:** Handout and video.

## Procedure

### INTRODUCTIONS (3 MIN)

- Presenters introduce themselves to the group, participants introduce themselves to a neighbor.

### AGREEMENTS (5 MIN)

- Invite the group to suggest agreements to create a safe discussion environment. They may include:
  1. Stay engaged (Remove distractions.)
  2. Speak your truth (Talk about your own self, life, and story, rather than those of others.)
  3. Experience discomfort (Stay in the conversation, even when you are uncomfortable.)
  4. Expect/accept non-closure (Some things will remain unclear.)
  5. Ouch! (We may feel hurt by what we hear – please speak up when this happens.)

### OPENING (2 MIN)

- In this TED talk, novelist Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie reflects on how she found her authentic cultural voice – and warns that if we carry only a single story about another person or group, we risk a critical misunderstanding. She will take us on a journey of her own experiences, sharing not only “single stories” she had about others, but also stories she found others carried that affected her. After watching the video, we will engage you in a focused conversation about the video and the stories you carry and encounter too.

### WATCH VIDEO (14 MIN)

- Watch from 0:00 to the 14:08 minute mark. Video is available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D9lhs241zeg>.

## "1-2-4-ALL" DISCUSSION MODEL (17 MIN)

Introduce the process: first participants reflect individually, then discuss in a pair, then in a group of four, then all. (1 min)

- Silent self-reflection by individuals on a shared challenge/question (2 min)
  - a. What are "single-stories" others have believed about you?
  - b. What are "single stories" you have believed about others?
- In pairs, share a story and generate ideas for addressing single stories. (4 min)
- Two pairs get together and develop ideas, noticing similarities and differences. (5 min)
- "What is one idea that stood out in your conversation?" Each small group shares one important idea with all. (5 min)

## LEADERSHIP TOOL TAKEAWAYS (4 MIN)

Note the tools participants can re-use, as they wish in their own contexts:

- Share this video with others and host your own conversation.
- Use the agreements.
- Use 1-2-4-All method of reflection.
- Use this workshop facilitation template.

## GROUP DEBRIEF (15 MIN)

- What is the "danger" in these single stories?
- How are these stories perpetuated?
- Who has the power to set the agenda and tell the story in the places where you work/serve/learn?
- What can you do to interrupt single stories?

Going around the circle, ask each participant to share one commitment to action and/or one word reflecting how they are feeling now.

"The Danger of a Single Story" workshop was developed by Minnesota Campus Compact staff with Dave Ellis and Andrew Cseter, building on the TED talk of Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie. The agreements in this workshop have been adapted from Glen Singleton's Courageous Conversations.

We welcome your suggestions for improving this guide further for future trainings. We also welcome you to use it and adapt it for your own trainings, subject to the terms below.

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## **The Danger of a Single Story** (TED Talk: Chimamanda Adichie)

Chimamanda Adichie's TED Talk, "The Danger of a Single Story." Adichie weaves together her personal story of growing up in Nigeria and moving to the United States for college with a provocative discussion on the nature of stories and storytelling. She calls attention to "the danger of a single story." In short, defining an experience based on a single account gives us incomplete, potentially damaging understandings of other people. Jonathan Gold (2015) Teaching Tolerance Southern Poverty Law Center.

- *danger of a single story*
- *an absence of a narrative (those who can't tell their story)*
- *how to allow for new narratives*
- *power lies in who sets the agenda and who gets to tell the story*
- *if ALL we look for is poverty, crime, dehumanizing – then that's ALL we see in our communities*

### **Local Example – The Danger of Single Story.**

- North Minneapolis. web link: <https://ebonyjohanna.com>

### **Hosting a Community Dialogue**

- Environment needs to be safe enough to create more safety and engagement
- Honoring the space to the story telling and the story teller
- Setting up agreements
  - o said here, stays here (ask permission)
  - o listen with attention & speak with intention
  - o leadership is within the group
  - o honor silence
  - o honor the process

### **Resources**

- Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's TED Talk "The Danger of a Single Story":  
web: [http://www.ted.com/talks/chimamanda\\_adichie\\_the\\_danger\\_of\\_a\\_single\\_story.html](http://www.ted.com/talks/chimamanda_adichie_the_danger_of_a_single_story.html)
- Building the Field of Community Engagement, a collaborative initiative by six Twin Cities organizations, defines community engagement as building on community assets: relationships, power, healing, identity, and culture/spiritual. web: <http://www.buildthefield.org/>
- Art of Hosting and Harvesting Conversations that Matter TM. web: <http://www.artofhosting.org/>
- Dave Ellis Consulting, LLC. web: <http://www.daveellisconsulting.com/>



## Survey for “Danger of a Single Story” Workshop

Thank you for taking time to attend this Civic Agency workshop. We are very interested in receiving your feedback. (Alternatively, you may also complete this survey online at [http://augsburg.az1.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV\\_06aoPbGJyJ7I7oF](http://augsburg.az1.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_06aoPbGJyJ7I7oF) If you have participants complete evaluations on paper, please scan them and send them to [info@mncampuscompact.org](mailto:info@mncampuscompact.org).

### Your Information

**Primary Role:** Student, Faculty, Staff, Administrator, Community Organization Staff, AmeriCorps/VISTA

**Institution** (College, University, Organization):

**Date:**

Please indicate how strongly you agree/disagree with the following about your experience with the Civic Agency workshop you participated in	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
I felt welcomed and included.					
I learned about one or more leadership tools or resources.					
The tools and exercises I learned about are valuable.					
I feel capable of using the tools and exercises I learned about.					
I intend to use at least one thing I learned here.					
Other participants in the workshop helped me see things from a different perspective.					
I developed new or deeper connections with others.					

Is there anything you'd like to tell us about your experience with the workshop?



Campus Compact  
Minnesota

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