A photograph of the Uluru rock formation in Australia. The rock is a reddish-brown color and is partially covered in shadows. A vibrant rainbow is visible on the left side of the rock, arching over the horizon. The sky is dark blue with white clouds, and the foreground is a grassy field with some bushes.

Spirituality and Survivorship: Transforming Trauma into Healing with Aboriginal Wisdom

Brian Hill, MBA

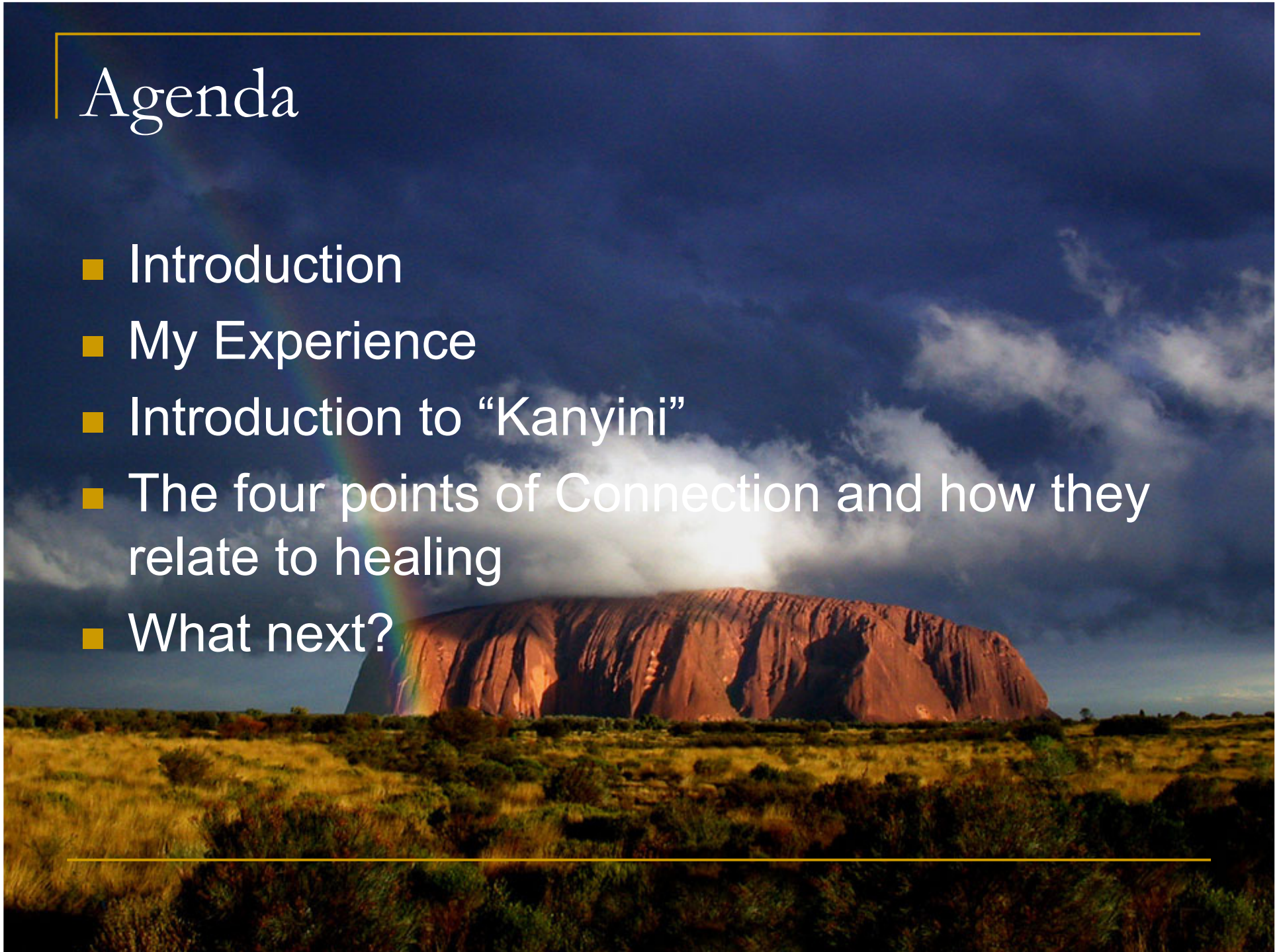
AAS/SPAN USA 21st Annual Healing After Suicide
Conference - Paths that Lead to Healing

April 18, 2009 - San Francisco, CA

Photo: Paul "Chief" Christensen

Agenda

- Introduction
- My Experience
- Introduction to “Kanyini”
- The four points of Connection and how they relate to healing
- What next?



My Experience



Kanyini: Four Points of Connection

- Land

- Everything you need is provided

- Family

- We are “One Spirit” and you are connected to all living things – you are part of “all that there is”

- Belief System

- What you think, you become (“The Dreaming”)

- Spirituality

- God is Love



“Kanyini” by Melanie Hogan and Bob Randall

- While you watch this clip, think about how you can relate your experience as a survivor to the Aboriginal experience – do you see the similarities in your story and theirs?
- The result for many survivors is the fracture of the same points of connection, including:
 - Material and financial Loss
 - Loss of the family structure
 - Shame and stigma associated with suicide, and difficulty in keeping a positive outlook
 - Loss of faith and ultimately self-confidence
- After the film, we will discuss the four points of Connection more and come up with some practical actions to restore “Kanyini” in your Life

Land

Everything you need is provided

- Challenges for a suicide survivor:
 - Oftentimes disastrous financial results of suicide of a spouse, etc.
 - Loss of home, income, even job due to stigma attached to the suicide of a loved one
 - Relocation to new geography

- Lessons from “Kanyini”:
 - Whatever you *need* to get through this will be provided - there is no reason for anxiety or fear
 - The Land will look after you

Family

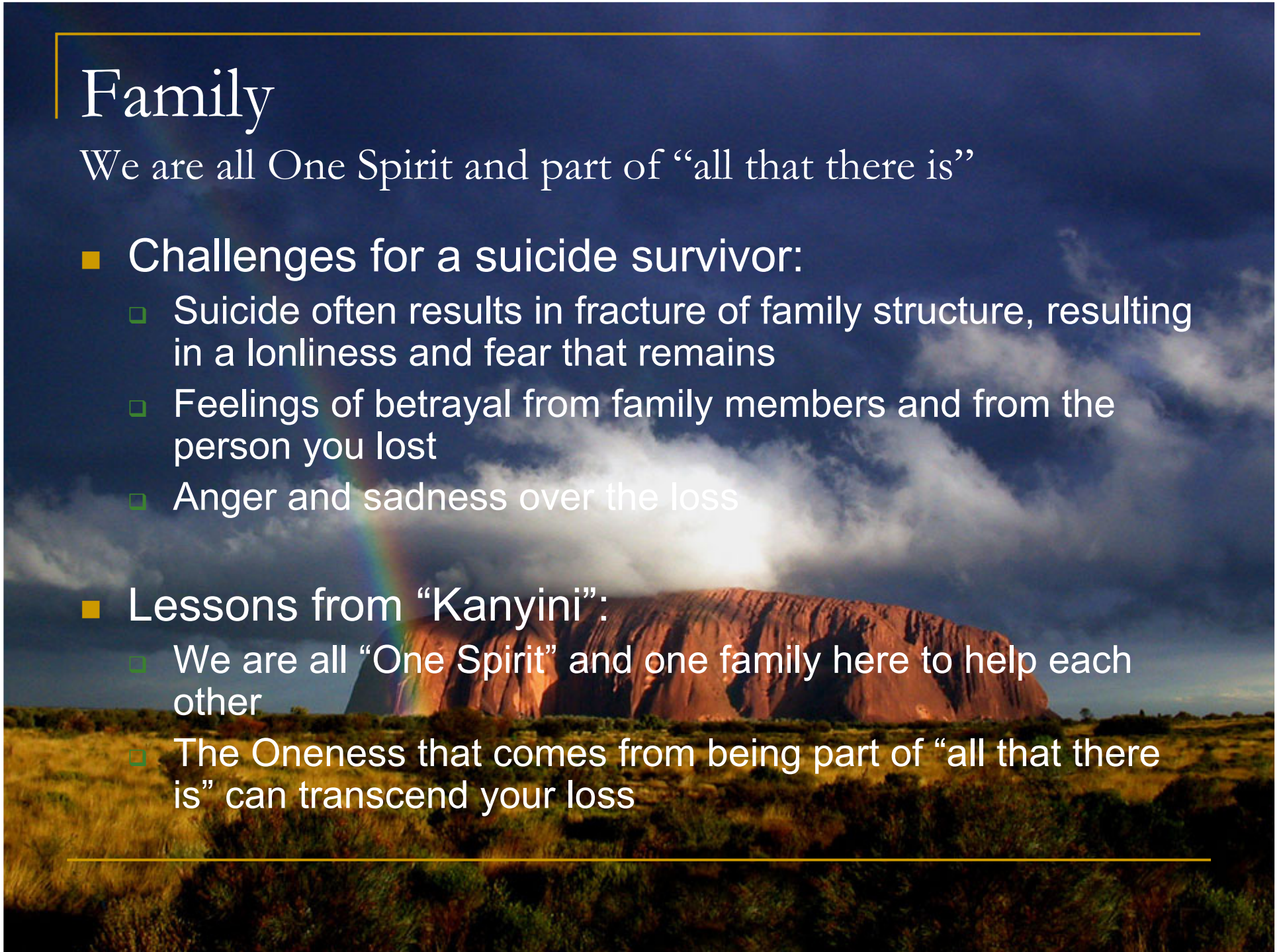
We are all One Spirit and part of “all that there is”

■ Challenges for a suicide survivor:

- Suicide often results in fracture of family structure, resulting in a loneliness and fear that remains
- Feelings of betrayal from family members and from the person you lost
- Anger and sadness over the loss

■ Lessons from “Kanyini”:

- We are all “One Spirit” and one family here to help each other
- The Oneness that comes from being part of “all that there is” can transcend your loss



Belief System

What we think, we become

- Challenges for a suicide survivor:
 - In essence, all belief systems, to be solid, should be about positive thought
 - The fear and anxiety leading to and culmination with the suicide makes it more difficult for survivors to think positively and remain optimistic about ones life
 - Our belief system in the USA is one of “success” so there is the additional stigma attached to the “failure” attached to suicide
- Lessons from “Kanyini”:
 - You can transcend the shame you may feel and the frustration from others not understanding what you are going through
 - Your confidence in positive outcomes is ultimately up to you, not others – make your life a good Dream

Spirituality

Love one another and you love yourself

- Challenges for a suicide survivor:
 - Many religions call suicide a “sin”, resulting in a disconnection with your tradition
 - If Spirituality is Love, compassion for the person who decided to leave your Life may be difficult to find
 - Ultimately self-love and confidence in yourself may suffer

- Lessons from “Kanyini”:
 - “God is Love” is all that really matters - this simple message transcends religious traditions
 - The path is forgiveness; forgive others (and yourself)
 - You can't control the actions of others – only yours

What Next?

Simple, practical actions you can take to heal are re-Connect

■ Land

- Spend extended time in nature and turn off your “gadgets” to admire the beauty of the Land
- Take a trip in the nature with NO PLAN
- Look over your Life and notice where “coincidences” happened that provided you with what you needed

■ Family

- Get involved with volunteer work for a cause you care about
- Talk with estranged family members
- Develop new relationships with positive people

■ Belief System

- Meditation (International Meditation Centres have a great program)
- Visualize positive things you want to experience (“The Secret”)
- Avoid negative stories on the news, and choose good stuff instead (ie: Susan Boyle)
- Incorporate positive words and expressions and eliminate negatives in your vocabulary
- Believe your fortune cookies (if they sound good to you!)

■ Spirituality

- Keep a journal and write in it what you did right every day to find the Divinity within
- Explore other religious traditions, especially Indigenous traditions, Eastern religions and the mystical counterparts of your religion

Contact

- This presentation and related links can be found at www.brianhill.com/kanyini
- “Kanyini” documentary can be purchased at www.kanyini.com
- Brian Hill (brian@brianhill.com)

