

VIBE ACTIVITIES

Stay Strong – Over the Hurdles pages 24 and 25



STAY STRONG

Over the hurdles

Olympic track and field star learns to live well off the track

EVONDBLUE BAMBASSAOR AND FORMER OLYMPIC HURDLER KYLE VANDER KUIJP BOTH ON AND OFF THE TRACK AND LEARNED THAT MANAGING THE HIGHS AND LOWS, AS WELL AS TALKING DOWN, CAN GET YOU THROUGH THE DARK TIMES.

Kyle vander Kuyp, inspiration in 2004 after a series of professional and personal disappointments took their toll. He was in Europe trying to qualify for his third Olympics, often he knew something was wrong.

"It was a combination of things. I had still trying to be an athlete at 33 years and there was not a lot of people... every older I had you have to be a specialist and that list of things. I spent a couple for my first Olympic at qualifying the day."

"I was in the middle of a relationship breakup and I also had a strong urge to meet my biological family, looking back on it was messy and emotionally dependent. I also wanted to know how I was to get up and training."

"I wasn't sleeping and when I had athletic going up my level, I knew something was going on. I was also being questioned frequently by friends while in Europe to qualify in 11th the pressure of needing to do well for them."

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"During the relationship breakup in February of that year I had run 13.45 second at the National Trials so I knew my performance was on track for selection. I didn't run the 13.55 that was needed at the qualifiers, so I was one tenth off. To be not included because of that, and then the relationship breaking up... the depression kicked in."

"The depression it went pretty dark for me. I was in Europe and the experience was not what I needed. I was a really self for me."

Kyle went to see a doctor in Sweden who diagnosed him with burnout and told him to make sure he saw a doctor back in Australia. He had done work for a year in the pit and made a call to them. They recommended he see Professor Patrick McCrory.

"I had five sessions with Professor McCrory. It was a massive sense of relief that I was finally starting to process things and put all the events into place. And I started to hear the word depression and realized a lot of people have it, and that there was no shame in it." Kyle says.

When he was at the darkest point, Kyle recalls he had a vision in his head he couldnt think.

"I could see myself in a car going along and I knew I had to push that car to perform but there was a blocking force at the back. I had to push the car and I knew the car had to be in the air. I had to push the car and I knew the car had to be in the air. I had to push the car and I knew the car had to be in the air."

There is the other side athletes for Kyle. He is currently working for the Australian Indigenous Mentoring Experience (AIME) at a program manager and would like to take on mentoring further, particularly with young indigenous athletes.

"When I was depressed I did go and see a sports doctor and he prescribed some anti-depressants. I heard they took away all my feeling and I knew they were not right for me. Some people need to take anti-depressants but I knew I needed to get the best advice possible."

"As an athlete I was always on top of my physical fitness and had always sought out the best help for any problem. I didn't just want to take anti-depressants, I wanted the best help."

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"If there is a message I would pass on, it's if you notice any change in your mood, talk to your family or your best friend about it, and don't be afraid to talk about it because you are not strange or weird - a lot of people get depressed."

Managing the highs and lows of competing can be difficult for any athlete and if managing the experience helps going through the experience and the best friend, then Kyle is satisfied that his experience will have made a difference.

"As an athlete I was always focused on performance and outcomes. I experienced incredible highs, like the day I competed at the Olympics and I was ranked 7th in the world. And then there was the day when I didn't qualify and I reached the bottom of the barrel."

"But that made me realize that keeping things in the middle was the best way to go."

After officially retiring in 2008, Kyle is still experiencing the highs. One was in 2009 when the daughter was born. And another will be when he buys his own house for his family.

"In 2010 I did the Kokoda track and timed with a personal trainer to

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"I part of me will always miss the track, though and if someone said I'd support you to make a comeback, I would probably do that even though I haven't trained for four years. That's just how it is."

"In the future I would like to mentor indigenous athletes so that they are aware of those highs and lows at elite competition level. There is plenty of talent out there but the remaining fight through is what is missing. We need to help the 15-year-old athlete become the 23-year-old athlete who is not just equipped with skills on the sporting field, but with life and leadership skills."

Kyle Vander Kuyp is an Australian Olympic champion athlete of Worimi and Yuin heritage from North and South Coast NSW. He was adopted when he was five weeks of age.

Even though he has been an elite athlete for many years, he suffered from depression in 2004. He contacted the organisation Beyond Blue to seek help and was able to overcome the illness.

He is currently working for the Australian Indigenous Mentoring Experience (AIME) where he supports young Indigenous athletes so they are able to manage the highs and lows of their sporting experiences.

READ *Over the Hurdles* on pages 24 and 25



ACTIVITY 1

BUILDING READING SKILLS


- skimming and scanning for information.
- reading headings, text boxes and pictures.
- reading for meaning.
- making connections between the text and your world.

There are three levels of comprehension questions:

- | | |
|-----------------|---|
| Literal | The answer is located in one sentence in the text. |
| Inferred | You need to make links between sentences and graphics (such as illustrations, maps and tables) and what you already know. |
| Applied | The answer is in your background knowledge and what you already know or feel. |

1 Which organisation offered Kyle Vander Kuyp a way to tackle his depression?

(inferred)



Write your answer on the lines.

2 What are some of the things that helped Kyle to overcome his depression?

(inferred)

3 What does Kyle plan to do now that he is feeling well?

(inferred)


- gain a psychology degree
- compete in another Olympics
- be a mentor for young Indigenous athletes
- become a Beyond Blue counsellor



Shade one bubble.

4 What is the relationship between the photos and the main text?

(inferred)



Write your answer on the lines.

5 What is the overall purpose for writing this text?

(applied)

ACTIVITY 2

LANGUAGE CONVENTIONS – SPELLING

- 1** The spelling mistakes in these sentences have been underlined. Write the correct spelling for each word in the box.

Kyle Vander Kuyp suffered from depreshon.

It began because of a combinashon of issues.

Beyond Blue aims at improveing mental health.

He missed out on gaining selectshon for the team.



- 2** Each sentence has one word that is incorrect. Write the correct spelling of the word in the box.

It is important to maintane your mental health.

They recomended that he see a doctor.

He also underwent some counselling.

It was a releif to find some solutions.

ACTIVITY 3

LANGUAGE CONVENTIONS – SPELLING - HOMOPHONES

- 1** Homophones are words that sound alike but have a different meaning and spelling. Circle the correct word for the clue.

break • brake	to make a car stop
to • too • two	more than one
shore • sure	to be certain
you • ewe	a pronoun
write • right	correct

ACTIVITY 4

LANGUAGE CONVENTIONS – GRAMMAR

1 Which word correctly completes this sentence?

Kyle is _____ young Indigenous athletes.

- mentor
- mentoring
- mentored
- mentors



2 These words are all written in the **present tense**, put in the correct word to change them into the **past tense**.



present tense	past tense
suffer	suffered
break	
achieve	
select	
mentor	
start	
prescribe	
visit	
train	
manage	