

St. Joseph's School, Barmera

Values Education Project: Building a Resilient Community

During 2011, Staff at St. Joseph's School, Barmera, took part in a Choice Theory Practicum. This built on earlier professional development throughout the year where all staff had the opportunity to participate in a Choice Theory Intensive Course.

Choice Theory is based on the work of William Glasser, and is a theory about why people choose to do the things they do. Sometimes referred to as Reality Therapy, Choice Theory seeks to explain what drives human beings to want and need things; it also looks at the various ways people go about meeting these needs in life – as children, students, adults..

Choice Theory is based on the idea that all humans need relationships with others

At St. Joseph's, Barmera, the staff support all children and families by exploring relationships with them, looking at what makes for good relationships and what may cause distress in relationships. Children learn appropriate ways of connecting with others, balanced with a growing respect for the differences they meet in other people.

Choice Theory is a strategy for reflection, for making good choices and taking responsibility for our actions, and for promoting harmony within the school community by addressing issues as they arise.

In 2011, we received funding through the Values Education program to continue this training of staff and to embed Choice Theory firmly into the culture of the school. This project, "**Building a Resilient Community**" is a way of acknowledging and promoting the values explicit in the Australian Government's Values Education Strategy, and at the same time affirming the values of the school which underpin all that takes place here at St. Joseph's.

The objectives of the project are :

- To skill teachers in Choice Theory to build confidence, resilience, self-esteem, positive choices, and empowerment in all students;
- To increase student engagement in their learning;
- To skill students in choosing appropriate behaviours to support their learning and to keep themselves and others safe, in a respectful manner.
- To teach children practical social and relationship skills.

In 2012, the process will continue, with involvement of parents in exploring our values and those of the Australian Government, with the purpose of building up a resilient, healthy community.

Kathy Horan

Principal.