

# WORKING WITH BARRIERS FOR JOB SEEKERS WITH A MENTAL ILLNESS AND DRUG AND ALCOHOL ISSUES

In 2009 Break Thru asked some of our Consultants who provide employment support to job seekers with mental illness and/or drug and alcohol issues, to talk to us about their experiences. The consultants also suggested strategies they found useful when providing services to these job seekers. **Some of the main things told to us were:**

- > Disabling barriers to securing sustainable employment include; long term unemployment and lack of up-to-date qualifications which can adversely affect mental health status over time.
- > Consultants identified stigma in the community, especially among potential employers as a barrier to employment.
- > Consultants were satisfied with their jobs and were highly satisfied with the training opportunities available to them.
- > Consultants reported that job seekers can be reluctant to disclose information about drug and alcohol abuse issues, particularly if it is a current issue.
- > Consultants emphasised establishing rapport and building individual relationships with clients as important strategies that ensure quality employment service delivery.



## What will the next steps be?

These results are part of Working with Barriers - a larger research project that Break Thru is conducting with the University of Sydney. The research studies the experiences of jobseekers with mental illness and drug and alcohol issues. In 2010 Break Thru will continue to talk to jobseekers across Break Thru about the issues involved in looking for work. The final results of the project will be released at the end of this year.

A **BIG THANK YOU** to everyone who contributed!