

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

In 2009, Break Thru asked some of our jobseekers who experience mental illness, including drug and alcohol issues, to talk to us about the difficulties they've had, as well as some of the strategies they found useful when looking for work. **Some of the main things told to us were:**

- > Jobseekers with a mental illness want to work, and employment is an important way of being part of society and 'to get out of the house'
- > Jobseekers need support with the additional stress that comes from working (such as getting to work or job interviews on time)
- > Jobseekers with additional drug and alcohol issues can need support with managing social interactions, and at workplaces where alcohol/drug use is common
- > Jobseekers appreciate specialist (mental health) employment support services which also support them with their mental health issues.
- > Jobseekers value the time given and the one-on-one relationship with employment consultants who support their job seeking, are positive about outcomes and who are able to understand the challenges that come from having a mental illness.



## 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!