

## **Are You Ready if a Racist Incident Occurs in Your Area?**

Some time ago EMBRACE supported the All-Ireland Inter-Church Meeting on Racism in suggesting that people plan for the unhappy prospect of a racist attack in their area. The economic recession has increased the likelihood of racist attacks. Here are just some suggestions for what you can do now. This advice is aimed at churches but applies equally to other community groups that might be able get together to form a combined front to protect people who come under pressure.

- Organise training on diversity and migration awareness.
- Build links with people from other backgrounds who have moved into your area.
- Bring churches together to plan how you would respond in the event of a racist incident.
- Make sure you know how to contact the right people in the agencies who can help.
- These might include PSNI, Housing Executive, Community Safety, district council Good Relations or Anti-Racism officers etc.
- Visit people who have been attacked to reassure them and see if there is anything you can do.
- Go in pairs and if there are women alone in the house, ensure that there is a woman among the visitors.
- Never give publicity to an incident unless the victims want it to be known.
- If you are acting on behalf of someone keep a very careful record of events.
- Ensure that there is one person who can make a statement on behalf of everyone.
- Bear in mind that blanket statements attacking people who act in a racist way do little to help the victims and can make whole communities feel picked on and resentful.
- It is better to pray for and write public letters of support to politicians and other leaders who are trying to move us away from intolerance and towards sharing.