

# Briefing to the Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University and IDP Foundation on Community Mediation in Singapore

24 January 2025



# Outline

1. Context
2. The Community Mediation Centres (CMC) Act
3. Disputes Suitable for Mediation
4. Mediation at the CMC
5. Managing Volunteer Mediators
6. Raising Awareness
7. The Community Disputes Management Framework
8. Q & A



# Context



# Context



- Early pioneering efforts of using mediation in the then Subordinate Courts.
- Explore how mediation could be replicated on a wider scale.

- Channel community, family and social disputes through mediation.
- **Set up the Community Mediation Centre (CMC).**

- The CMC was established under MinLaw.
- Governs how mediation is conducted.
- Specifies the types of disputes that can be mediated at the CMC.
- Voluntary mediation and confidentiality provisions.



# Context

- Face-to-face voluntary mediation was provided for residents in Singapore to resolve their social, family and community disputes in an amicable manner.
- A team of officers from Ministry of Law manage the Case Administration, Volunteer Management and Outreach efforts.
- Mediation service is provided by a panel of trained volunteer mediators.



# Context

- Mediation at the CMC is largely voluntary, except for the Court referred cases from the Magistrate's Courts, Small Claims and Community Disputes Resolution Tribunal cases which are referred to the CMC by the State Courts.
- Since our inception, we have mediated more than 11,000 cases, with an overall success rate of about 80%.
- Today, we have close to 160 trained volunteer mediators who assist us to conduct the mediation sessions.



# The CMC Act



# The CMC Act

## Section 8 - Mediators

- Mediators must be appointed by the Minister for Law

## Section 10 - Conduct of Mediation Session

- Conducted with little formality and technicality
- Rules of evidence do not apply
- Dispute should not be arbitrated or adjudicated at a mediation session
- Conducted in a private setting



# The CMC Act

## Section 11 – Disputes

- Social, family and community disputes that do not amount to arrestable offences

## Section 12 - Mediation to be Voluntary

- Attendance and participation at a mediation is voluntary
- Can withdraw from mediation at any time



# The CMC Act

## Section 13 - Settlement agreement to be in writing

- Only written settlement agreement is binding on the parties

## Section 20 - Secrecy

- Information relating mediation is kept confidential
- Disclosed only under specific prescribed circumstances



# Disputes Suitable for Mediation



# Neighbour Disputes



Noise	Obstruction of common corridor	Cigarette smoke	Air-con condensation
Issues related to pets	Dripping of water	Encroachment into property	Harassing Behaviour
Littering	Falsehood posted online	Harassing Behaviour Online	Religious practices
Smell	Smoke	Issues involving privacy	Trespassing
Unacceptable conduct	Vibrations	Wet laundry	



# Other Types of Disputes



## Family members

- Living arrangements
- Care & maintenance of elderly parents or family members



## Friends, Co-workers

- Unacceptable conduct
- Interest free loans



## Others

- Landlord & Tenant (non contractual matters)
- Unacceptable conduct



# Disputes NOT mediated at the CMC

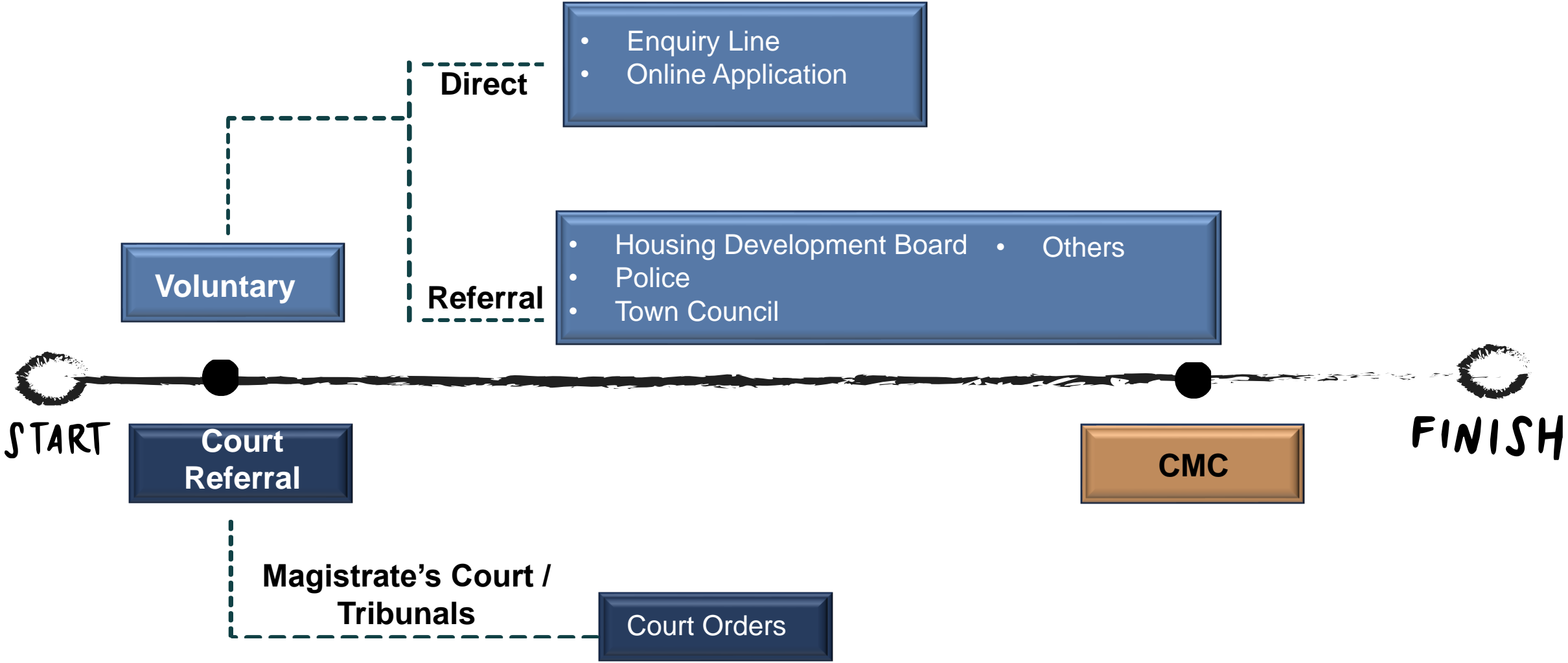
- Involves violence
- Is in the midst of Court proceedings or state investigations
- Requires expert assessment
- Commercial or contractual disputes
- A government agency is involved in the dispute
- Requires emotional/ mental health counselling



# Mediation at the CMC



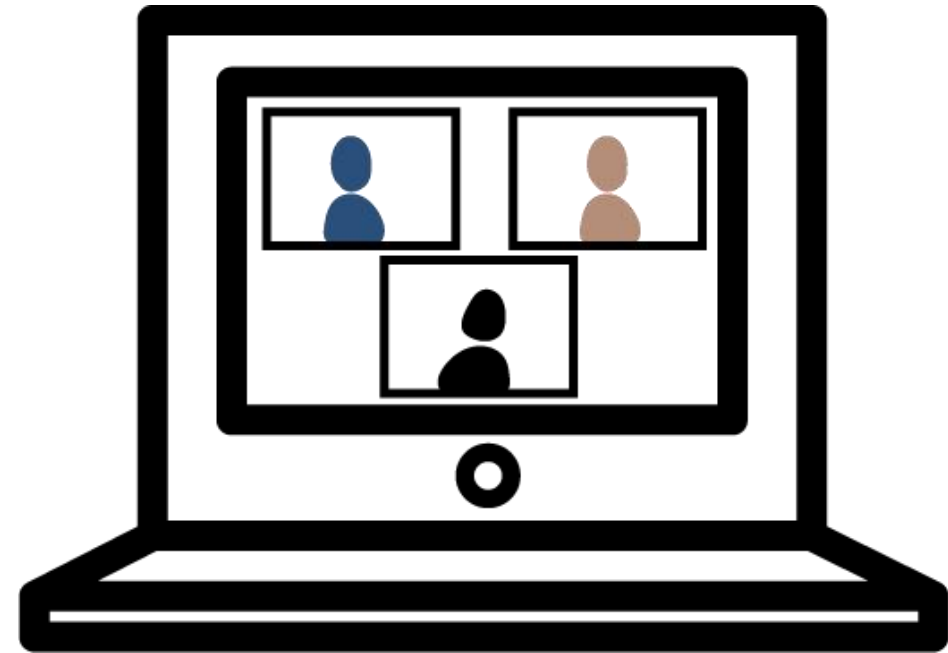
# Sources of Cases



# Modes of Mediation



- **Face-to-Face**
- **Satellite**  
(at community locations)



- **Zoom Mediation (suitable cases)**



# During Mediation

REGISTRATION

VERIFICATION

INTRODUCTION

CASE PRESENTATION

PRIVATE SESSION

COMING TO A CONCLUSION

SUCCESSFUL OUTCOME

UNSUCCESSFUL OUTCOME



# Post-Mediation

- Issues resurface
- Breach in agreement



Apply for Remediation

- New issues surface



Apply for Voluntary Mediation

- Continued breach after remediation



File a case with the Courts



# Managing Volunteer Mediators



# Appointment of Volunteer Mediators

- Candidates who are interested to volunteer as a CMC Mediator must meet certain **pre-requisites**.
- They will first undergo a **Selection Interview** before a panel.
- Next, selected candidates will undergo **Community Mediation Training and Practical Assessment**.
- Only those found successful will be put through an **Apprenticeship** where they will observe and co-mediate actual cases under the guidance of a senior mediator.
- Successfully apprentice mediators will be appointed under the CMC Act.
- **Appointment** term is 3 years and is renewable.
- In order for them to be **re-appointed**, mediators must meet **caseload, success rate and training requirements**.

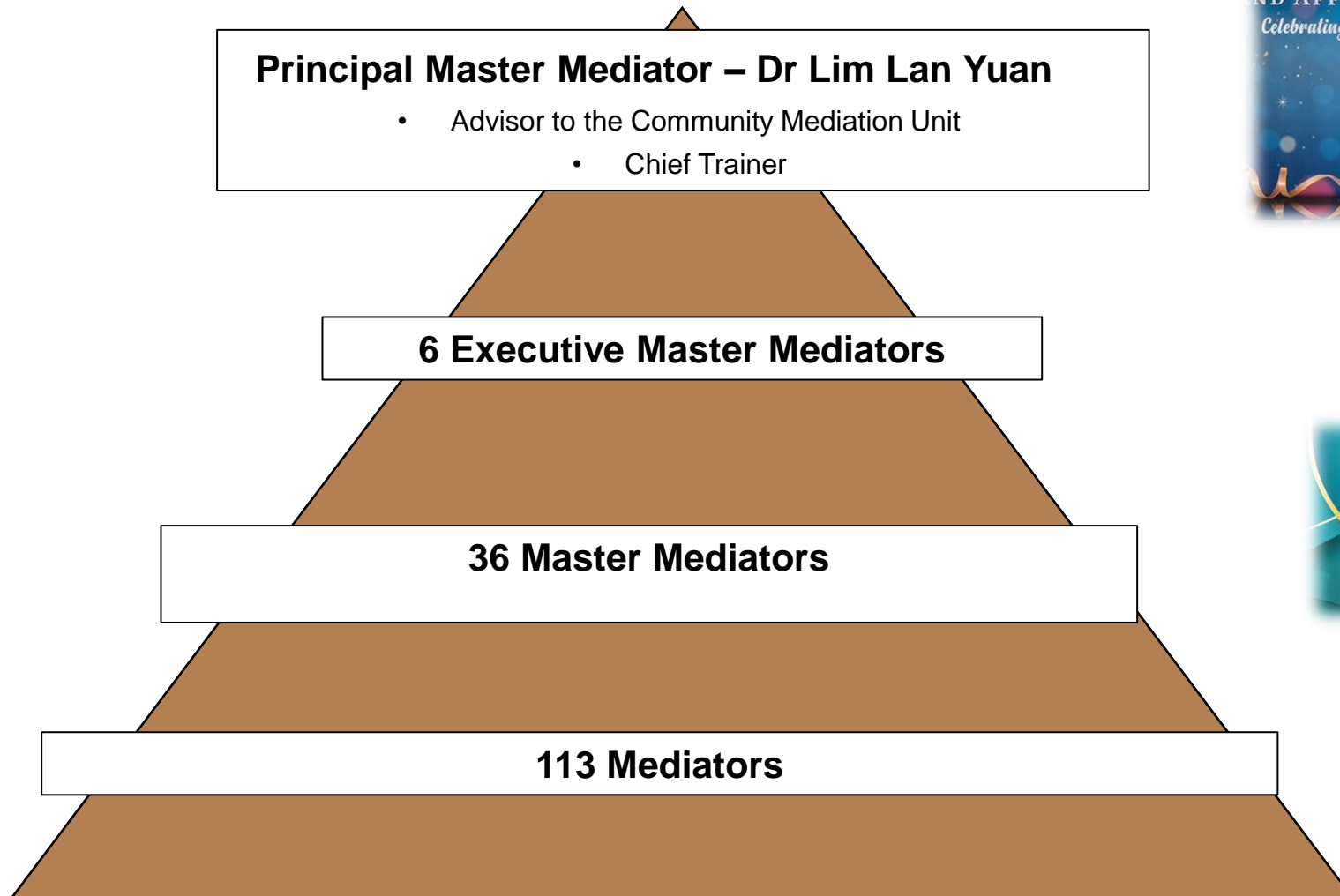


# Management of Volunteer Mediators

- The CMC uses the **Mediator Management Framework (MMF)** to govern how we manage our mediators.
- **The MMF** determines the minimum caseload, success rate and training hours requirements that mediators must meet before they qualify for a re-appointment.
- The **Mediator Management Guidelines (MMG)** determines the type and complexity of cases that are assigned to mediators of various tiers.
- Mediators can also progress up the tiers to Master Mediator, Executive Master Mediator and Principal Master Mediator when they have proven their competency to manage more complex cases.
- The professional conduct of the mediators is determined by the **Mediators' Code of Conduct**.



# Panel of Volunteer Mediators



# Expanded Roles of Volunteer Mediators

Apart from mediation, selected mediators are involved in the following roles:

- a) As a **member** of the Advisory Committee on Community Mediation (ACCM), they advise and recommendations on matters relating to volunteer mediators and the provision of mediation service to the public.
- b) As a **media ambassador**, they are trained to appear in media to raise the awareness of mediation and highlight its importance.
- c) As a **co-trainer**, they provide in-house training on mediation and other relevant areas.
- d) As a **mentor**, they guide junior mediators in their journey as a CMC mediator.
- e) As a **coach**, they guide mediators who require specific guidance on techniques and skills.



# Forms of Recognition

The CMC recognises the hard work of its volunteers through the following ways:

- **Annual Mediators Appreciation Dinner**
- **Advancement** to higher tiers – Master Mediator, Executive Master Mediator, Principal Master Mediator
- **Special Awards** – Outstanding Newcomer Award, Distinguished Service Award, Minister for Law Community Mediator Award
- **Long Service Appreciation Awards** – 5, 10, 15, 20, 25 years
- **Appreciation Videos**



# Other Benefits

- **Honorarium** – token sum paid for each case mediated
- **Insurance coverage** – in case of accidental injuries sustained during mediation





# Raising Awareness



# Raising Awareness

- 1) **Raise awareness of mediation** as an accessible and effective way of resolving community disputes.
- 2) **Positioning CMC as an empowering resource** for fostering positive neighbourly relations.
- 3) **Inform and convince the public about the advantages** of using mediation for resolving disputes.



# Digital Outreach



# Digital Ads

A Good Night's Rest is Precious

728 x 90 Banner



The screenshot shows a news article on The Straits Times Singapore website. The article title is "Government will not bring forward April 1, 2025, start date of shared parental leave: Indranee". A banner advertisement is highlighted with a brown border and a brown arrow pointing to it from the left. The banner features a photo of a woman covering her ears and a hand using a power drill. The text in the banner reads: "A GOOD NIGHT'S REST IS PRECIOUS" and "Having issues with your neighbour? We can help." Logos for eMc and the Ministry of Law Singapore are also present in the banner.

# Digital Ads

A Good Night's Rest is Precious  
300 x 600 Banner

The image shows a screenshot of a news article on the website [beritaharian.sg](http://beritaharian.sg). The article title is "Anak bantu bapa luaskan perniagaan dengan e-dagang" (Child helps father expand business with e-commerce). The article text states: "Untuk tarik pelanggan lebih muda, mereka lakukan strim secara langsung di Shopee" (To attract younger customers, they do live streaming directly on Shopee). The article is categorized under "Ekonomi & Kerja" (Economy & Work) and "Premium".

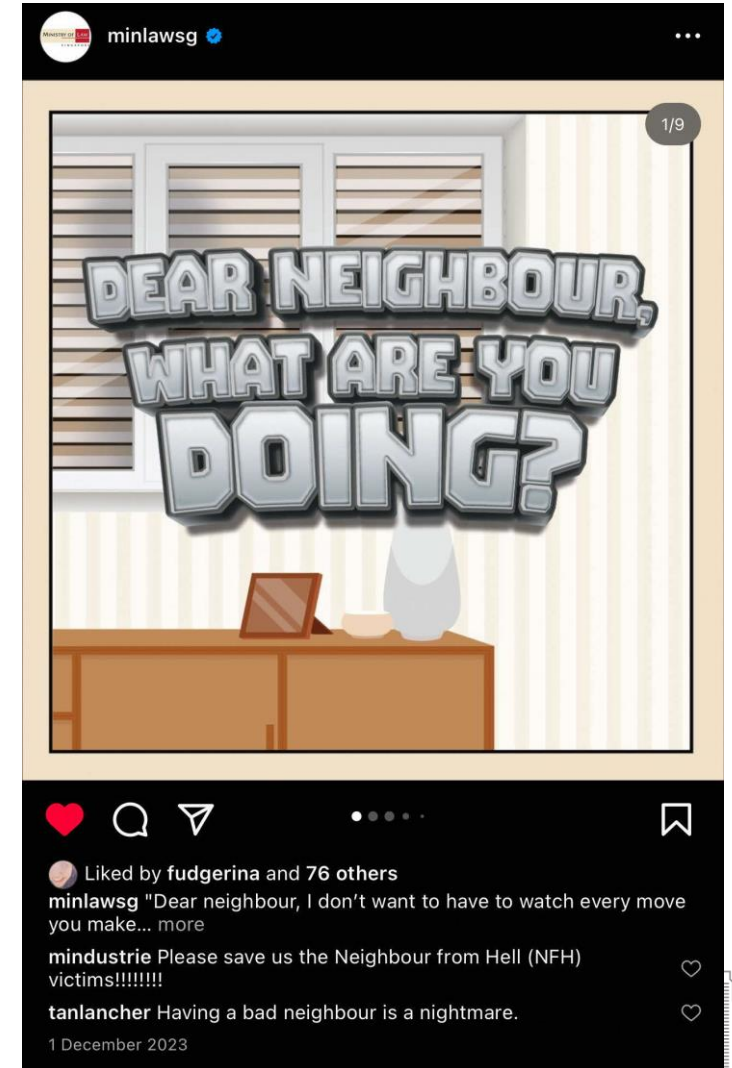
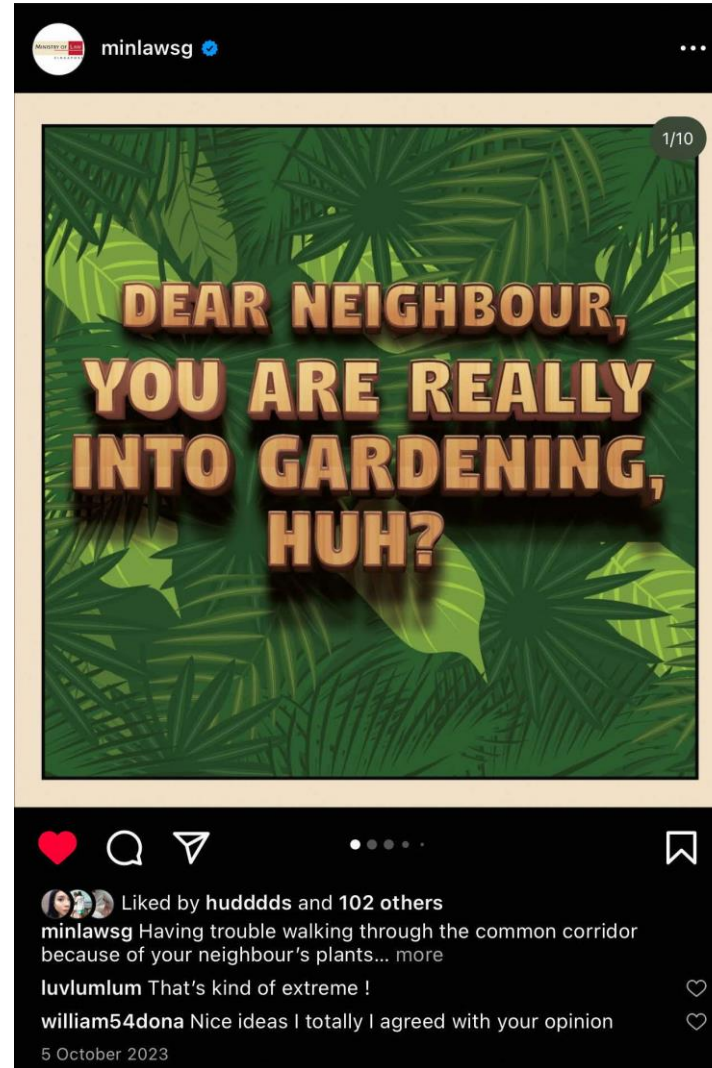
Overlaid on the right side of the article is a 300x600 banner advertisement. The banner features a hand using a red power drill to tear a hole in a wall. Through the hole, a man is seen sitting in bed, covering his ears with his hands, suggesting a noisy neighbor. The text on the banner reads: "A GOOD NIGHT'S REST IS PRECIOUS" at the top, and "Having issues with your neighbour? We can help." at the bottom. The logo for "eMc" and "MINISTERS OF LAW" is visible in the bottom right corner of the banner. A large brown arrow points from the right towards the banner.

At the bottom of the page, there is a navigation bar with the text "Kuiz BeritaHarian Uji pengetahuan anda dalam bahasa Melayu" (Quiz BeritaHarian Test your knowledge in Malay) and a URL <https://www.beritaharian.sg>.




# Social Media - Instagram

## “Dear Neighbour” Campaign




# Social Media - Facebook “Dear Neighbour” Campaign


 Ministry of Law, Singapore  
 17 May 2023 ·

Can't rest, work or hear anything at home because your neighbour is making too much noise?... See more

DEAR NEIGHBOUR, ARE YOU HAVING A PARTY?  
 EH BARE, DID YOU HEAR...  
 HUH? WHAT? CAN'T HEAR YOU LAH!!!  
 OUR NEIGHBOUR UPSTAIRS... VERY LOUD RIGHT?!!  
 WHAT DID YOU SAY? NEIGHBOUR UPSTAIRS HAVE GOUT?!!  
 SHALL WE GO UP AND TALK TO HIM?  
 I CAN'T EVEN PUT MY CHILD TO SLEEP!  
 I HAVE A ZOOM MEETING!  
 WE CAN'T EVEN HEAR WHAT WE ARE WATCHING!  
 I NEED MY BEST. I AM A HEAVY BATTERY!  
 LET'S SUGGEST THAT THEY ATTEND MEETINGS AT THE GYM.  
 +2  
 I'M HERE... I CAN'T SEE YOU TOO.  
 I'M SCARED, BARE. I DON'T THINK I'LL MAKE IT!  
 I'M COMING BACK FOR YOU. STAY CALM, YOU'LL BE GREAT!  
 +6  
 THAT'S MY NEIGHBOUR. WHAT IS SHE LOOKING AT STANDING OUTSIDE MY HOUSE?  
 THE NEXT DAY...  
 AGHHH! WHAT IS SHE DOING? STANDING THERE?  
 OH MY GOD! SHE IS EVEN ON MY BENCH ALL OVER THE CORRIDOR!  
 +5


33 7 comments 5 shares  
 Like Comment Share


 Ministry of Law, Singapore  
 5 Oct 2023 ·

Having trouble walking through the common corridor because of your neighbour's plants?... See more

DEAR NEIGHBOUR, YOU ARE REALLY INTO GARDENING, HUH?  
 BARE... WHERE ARE YOU? I CAN'T SEE YOU  
 I'M HERE... I CAN'T SEE YOU TOO.  
 I'M SCARED, BARE. I DON'T THINK I'LL MAKE IT!  
 I'M COMING BACK FOR YOU. STAY CALM, YOU'LL BE GREAT!  
 +6  
 THAT'S MY NEIGHBOUR. WHAT IS SHE LOOKING AT STANDING OUTSIDE MY HOUSE?  
 THE NEXT DAY...  
 AGHHH! WHAT IS SHE DOING? STANDING THERE?  
 OH MY GOD! SHE IS EVEN ON MY BENCH ALL OVER THE CORRIDOR!  
 +5

40 3 comments 6 shares  
 Like Comment Share


 Ministry of Law, Singapore  
 1 Dec 2023 ·

"Dear neighbour, I don't want to have to watch every move you make." ... See more

DEAR NEIGHBOUR, WHAT ARE YOU DOING?  
 TING! DING!  
 HMMM... A NOTIFICATION FROM MY DOORBELL CAMERA...  
 THAT'S MY NEIGHBOUR. WHAT IS SHE LOOKING AT STANDING OUTSIDE MY HOUSE?  
 THE NEXT DAY...  
 AGHHH! WHAT IS SHE DOING? STANDING THERE?  
 OH MY GOD! SHE IS EVEN ON MY BENCH ALL OVER THE CORRIDOR!  
 +5

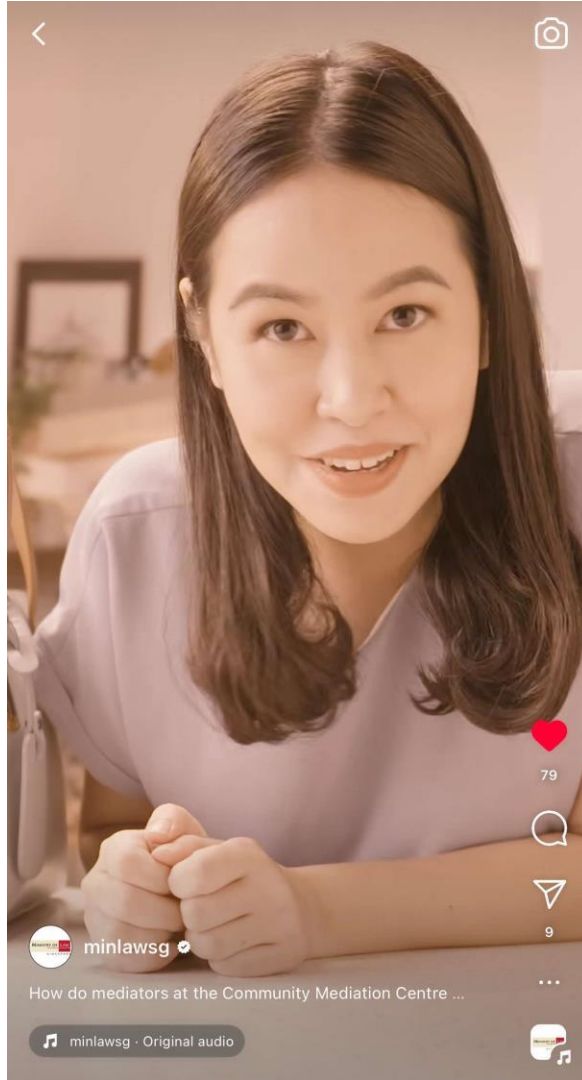
51 3 comments 40 shares  
 Like Comment Share





# Social Media – Instagram/Facebook

Mediators Point of View video





# Social Media – Instagram, Facebook, TikTok

Collaboration with SGAG: A TikTok video - How to win an argument with your wife/gf?

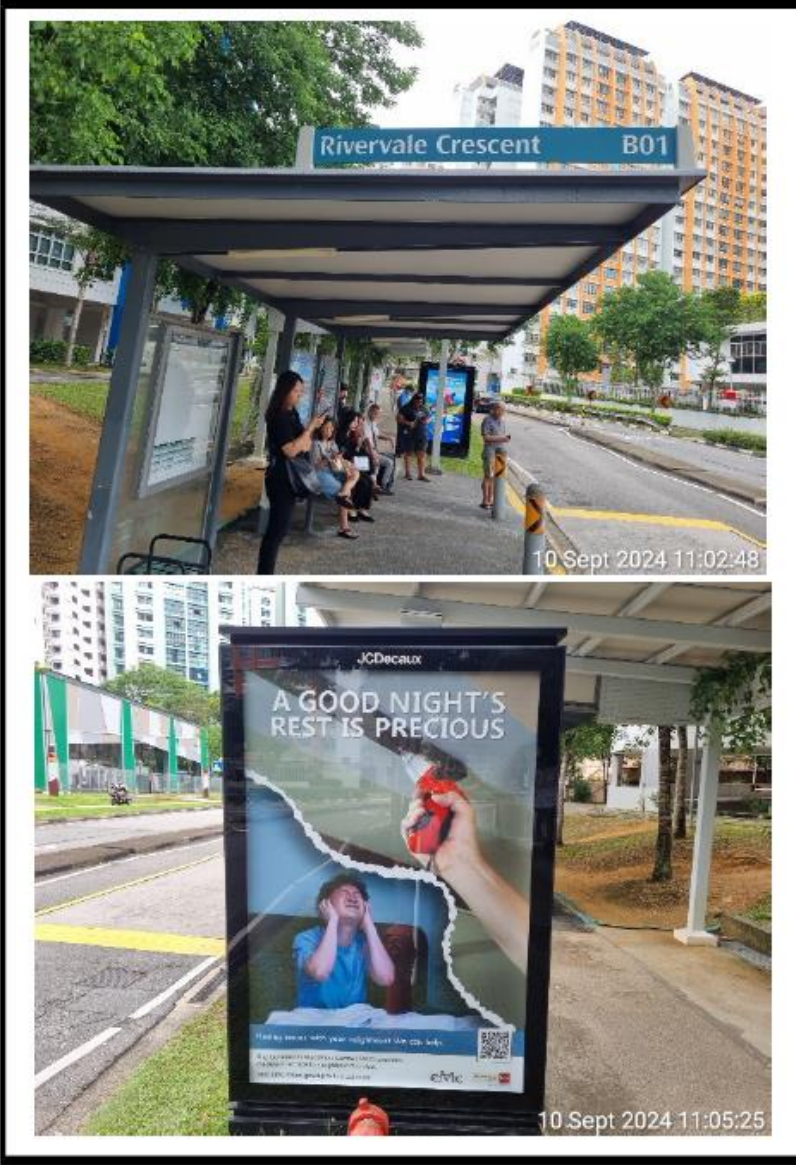


# Ground Outreach



# Bus Stop Ads

A Good Night's Rest is Precious



A GOOD NIGHT'S REST IS PRECIOUS

Having issues with your neighbour? We can help.

The Community Mediation Centre (CMC) provides mediation service for neighbour disputes. Visit [cmc.mlaw.gov.sg](http://cmc.mlaw.gov.sg) to find out more.

eMc MINISTRY OF LAW SINGAPORE

# Bus Stop Ads

A Good Night's Rest is Precious



Team 3  
23 October 2024 01:13



Team 3  
23 October 2024 01:15

The advertisement content is split into two horizontal panels. The top panel shows a group of people in a living room partying, with the text "A QUIET NIGHT IS PRECIOUS" overlaid. The bottom panel shows a woman sitting at a desk, covering her ears in distress, with a clock and a fan visible. The text "Having issues with your neighbour? We can help." is at the bottom.

Having issues with your neighbour? We can help.

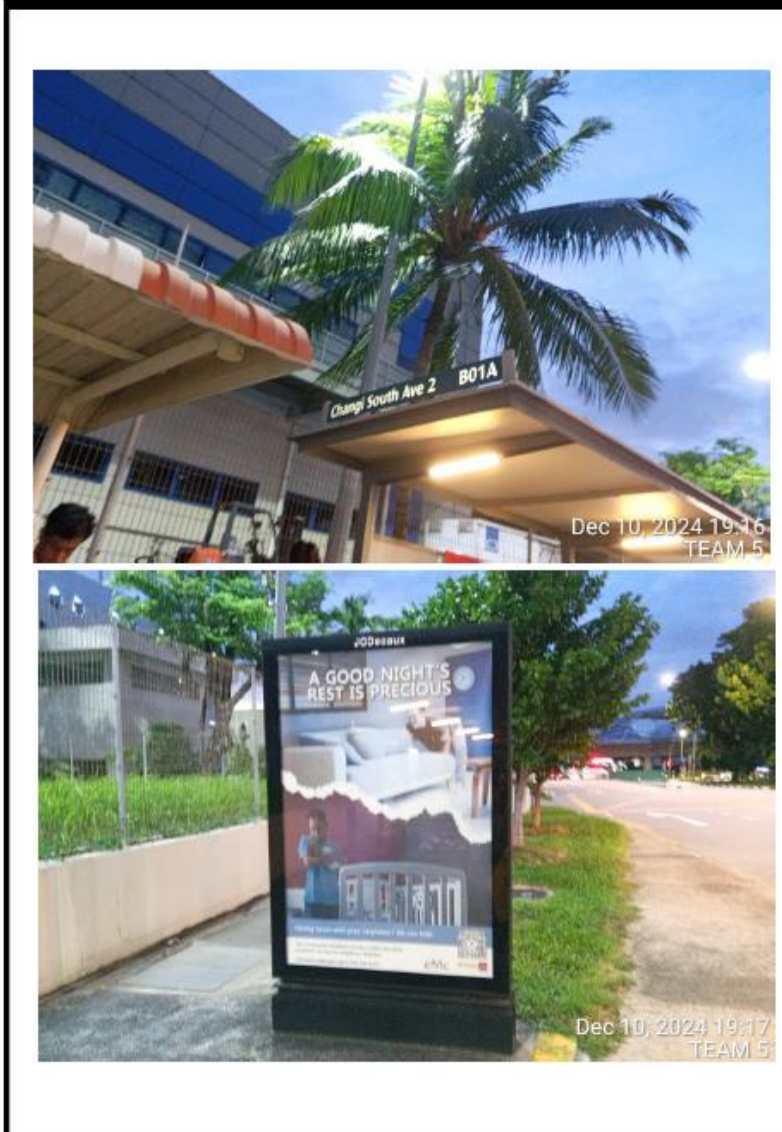
The Community Mediation Centre (CMC) provides mediation service for neighbour disputes.

Visit [cmc.mlaw.gov.sg](http://cmc.mlaw.gov.sg) to find out more.



# Bus Stop Ads

A Good Night's Rest is Precious



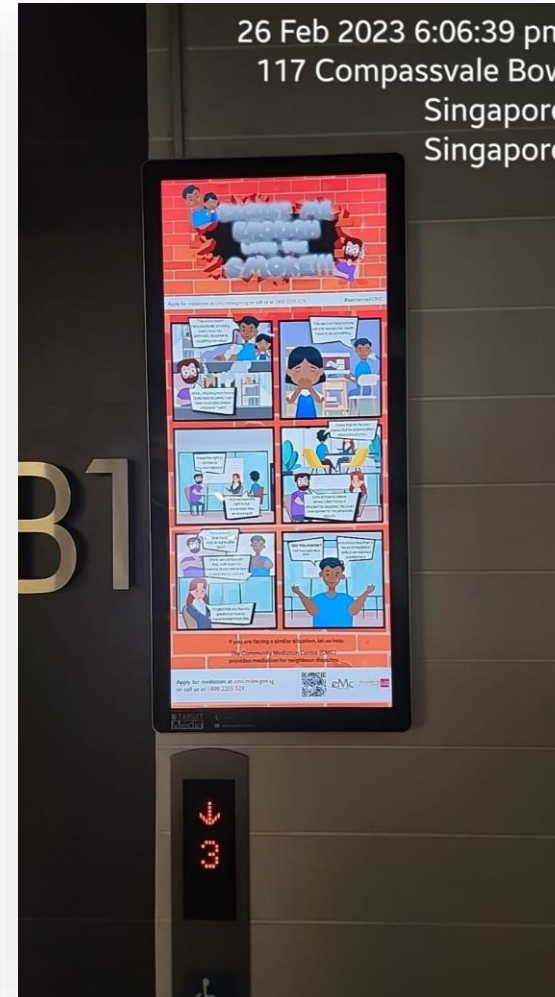
## A GOOD NIGHT'S REST IS PRECIOUS

Having issues with your neighbour? We can help.

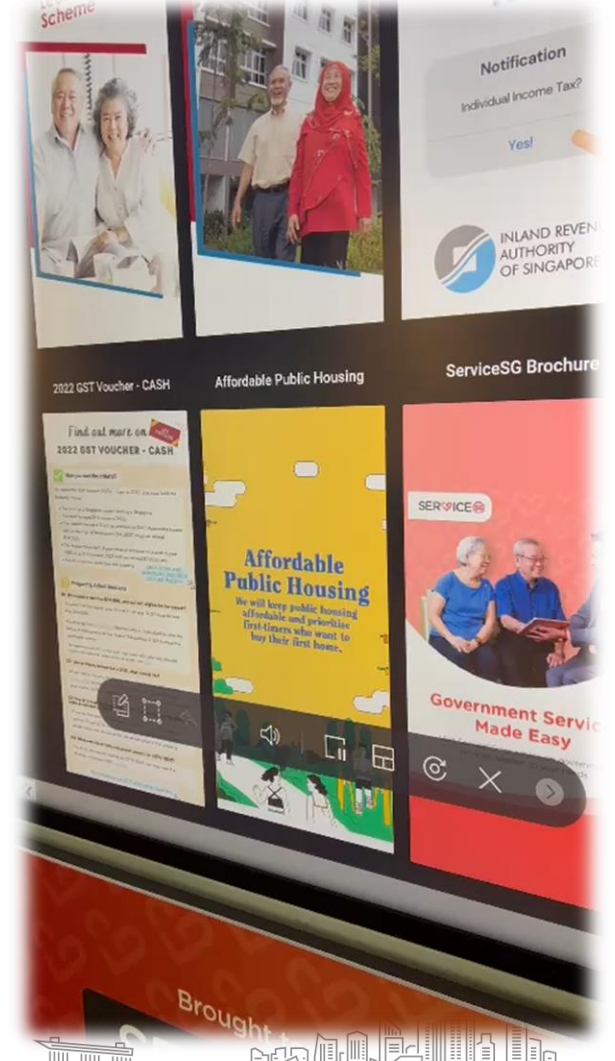
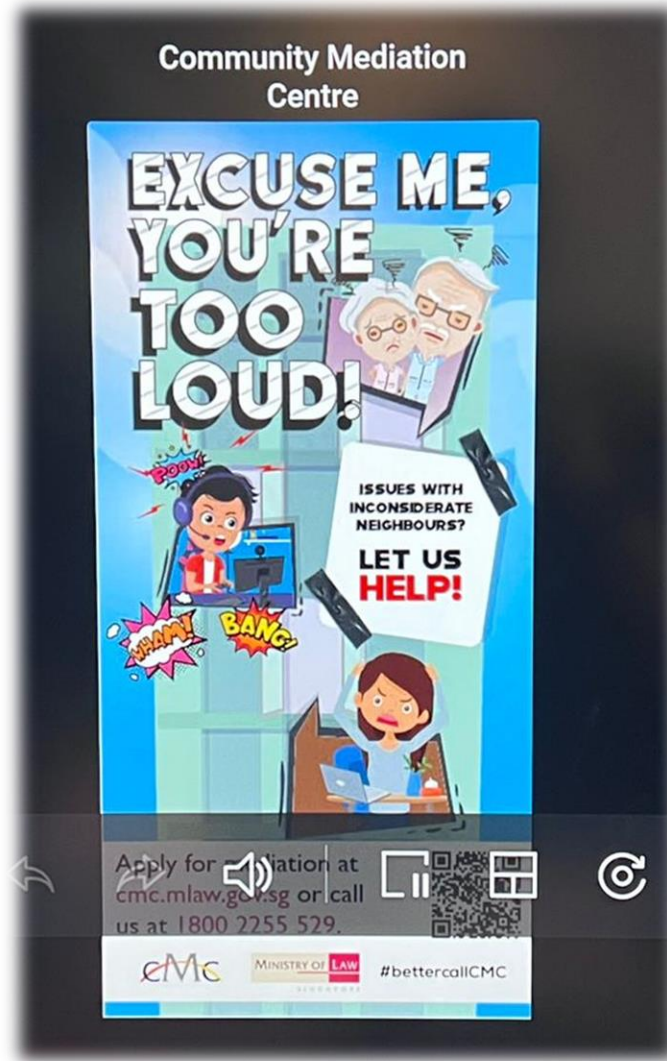
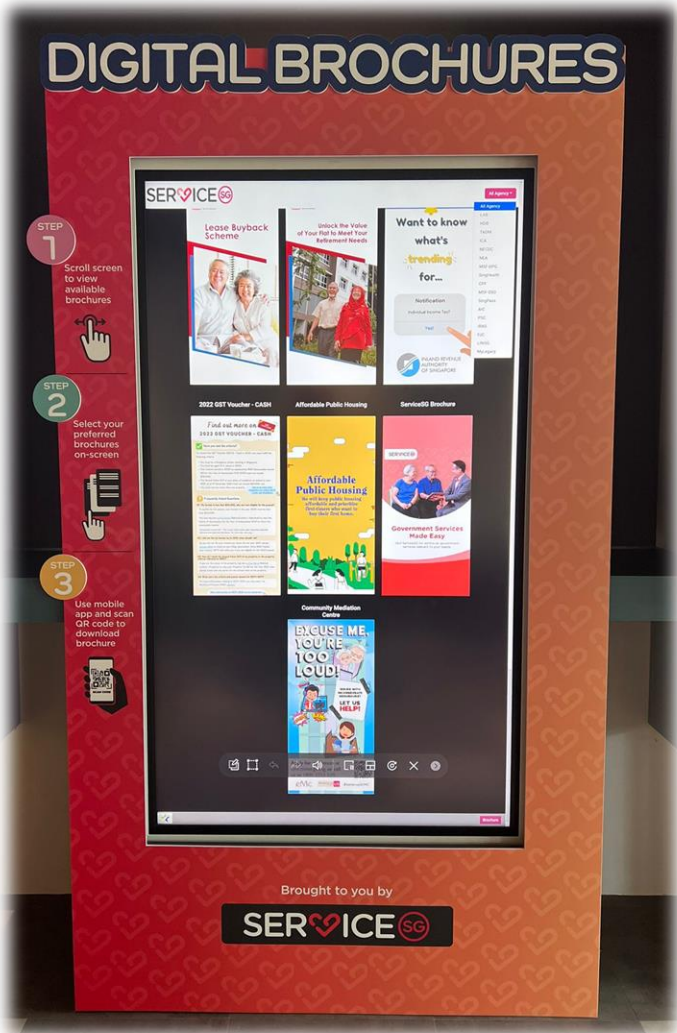
The Community Mediation Centre (CMC) provides mediation service for neighbour disputes. Visit [cmc.mlaw.gov.sg](http://cmc.mlaw.gov.sg) to find out more.



# Digital Display Panels at Public Housing Lift Lobbies



# E-Brochures displayed at Municipal Agencies

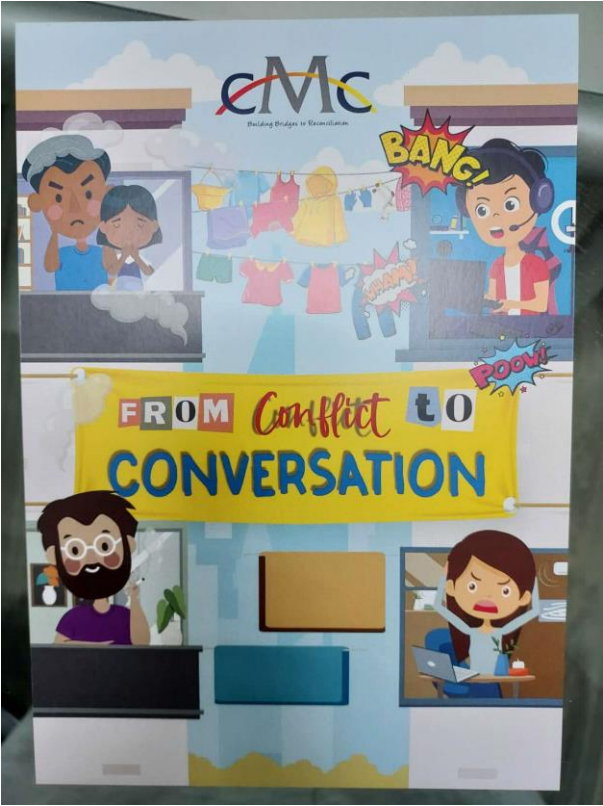


# Banners at community locations



# Brochures in local languages

From Conflict to Conversation



# Community Disputes Management Framework (CDMF)



# CDMF

**Fostering Good Relations Among Neighbours:**

**Resolve differences on their own first**

**Use mediation to resolve disputes**

**Seek legal recourse as a last resort**



# CDMF Enhancements

- 1) Encouraging the increased use of community mediation to resolve neighbour disputes at an early stage.
- 2) Piloting a new Community Relations Unit (CRU) to address a small minority of severe neighbour noise disputes and hoarding cases.
- 3) Enhancing the processes and powers of the Community Disputes Resolution Tribunals (CDRT)



# Encouraging the increased use of community mediation to resolve neighbour disputes at an early stage

**Pre-filing requirement** for disputing neighbours to attempt voluntary mediation before filing a CDRT claim (Court proceeding).

- If neighbours are unable to resolve their disputes on their own, they can approach the grassroot leaders (GRLs) in their constituencies.
- GRLs have been trained to informally mediate neighbour disputes.
- If that does not work, they can apply for voluntary mediation at the CMC.
- CMC mediation can be carried out at the Maxwell Road office, or at any of the 16 satellite mediation venues or virtually for suitable cases.



# Encouraging the increased use of community mediation to resolve neighbour disputes at an early stage

- For neighbours who have attempted voluntary mediation at the CMC, the CMC will issue one of the following:
  - 1) **Certificate of Waiver:** if the case is not suitable for mediation. The requirement to attend mediation is waived.
  - 2) **Certificate of Mediation:** The requirement to show that they have attempted mediation.
- For neighbours who are unwilling to attempt voluntary mediation, authorized agencies can issue a **Mediation Direction** to direct them to attend mediation. Attendance becomes compulsory and failure to attend becomes an offence.



# Registration of CMC Settlement Agreement as a Court Order

- Another CDMF enhancement that will be introduced, will improve the enforceability of mediated settlement agreements.
- Consenting parties are allowed to register their settlement agreement as a CDRT Order (Court Order).
- A registered settlement agreement (SA) will carry the same force and effect as a CDRT order.
- Facilitate quicker and simpler legal recourse in the event the terms of the registered settlement are breached.



# Administration Of Consent

- Parties have about 4 weeks from the date of mediation to register their SA as a CDRT Order (Court Order).
- The first option is for parties to provide Consent on the day of mediation, immediately after. The CMC Officer will administer this.
- The second option is for them to provide Consent online or in-person with the CMC Officer.



# Administration Of Consent

- If both parties provide Consent, the CMC will issue them with a **Notification of Consent**.
- Parties can then submit the Notification of Consent to Courts to register their SA.



# Q & A



# Visit Us!



# Thank you!

@minlawsg

