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KEEPING VOICE VISIBLE IN COMMUNITY MEDIATION

A Singapore Blueprint With Three Practice Rules

Community mediation often borrows legal habits that stabilise outcomes yet can dim fairness cues residents rely on: warmth, voice, and local legitimacy. Anchored in Singapore's ecosystem, this practice-led synthesis names that tension and offers a compact blueprint that mediation services can adopt without new funding. Three programme-neutral rules are proposed: (a) to plan mixed-background co-mediation roles; (b) to rotate the chair at phase boundaries; and (c) to run a two-minute voice check before any caucus. The rules are paired with ready-to-use scripts and a rubric for agreement quality focused on specificity, feasibility, verifiability, and a short review point. This article translates validated procedural justice items into a light-touch audit and derives three propositions for testing by mediation services in ordinary practice about sequencing, safeguards, and clarity. The article distinguishes the lawful floor from local participation, situates the blueprint within Asian community settings, and closes with a 90-day evaluation sketch of the proposed blueprint that requires no personal content storage. This article's contribution is a sequenced method that reconciles authority with authenticity in community rooms and invites practice-based study across volunteer-anchored and hybrid mediation services.

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I. Introduction: the professionalisation paradox

1 Community mediation stabilises fragile neighbourhood relationships, yet the very habits that make practice reliable can dim the cues that residents use to judge fairness, warmth, and legitimacy.[2] As volunteer

1 The author gratefully acknowledges the comments of legally trained colleagues on earlier drafts, particularly on statutory and doctrinal references. Responsibility for all interpretations and any errors remains with the author. The article is written from a practitioner's perspective and does not constitute legal advice.

2 Susan T Fiske, Amy J C Cuddy & Peter Glick, "Universal Dimensions of Social Cognition: Warmth and Competence" (2007) 11(2) *Trends in Cognitive Sciences* 77;

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and hybrid mediation services (*ie*, mediation services combining volunteer mediators with staff or professional practitioners) professionalise,[3] they import court-adjacent habits such as issue-narrowing, rights-first framing, and proof-seeking that help mediators keep order and close files.[4] The downside is subtle: when these habits dominate, participants can feel spoken for or managed rather than heard. The practical question is how to retain the protections of professionalisation without muting the visible signals that sustain perceived fairness.

2 This article offers a compact, programme-neutral blueprint to keep voice visible without new funding or staff. Anchored in Singapore's ecosystem,[5] it proposes three design rules, each paired with ready-to-use scripts and a light rubric for agreement quality: (a) to plan mixed-background co-mediation roles; (b) to rotate the chair at phase boundaries; and (c) to run a two-minute voice check before any caucus. This article translates validated procedural justice items into a light audit suitable for service use,[6] distinguishes the lawful floor from local participation, and frames three testable propositions that co-ordinators can evaluate in ordinary practice.[7]

3 Four terms are used throughout this article: warmth, voice, local legitimacy, and the lawful floor. For clarity and consistency, they are defined in Box 1 and usage will be kept stable for the remainder of the article.[8]

Jason Sunshine & Tom R Tyler, "The Role of Procedural Justice and Legitimacy in Shaping Public Support for Policing" (2003) 37(3) *Law & Society Review* 513; Justice Tankebe, "Viewing Things Differently: The Dimensions of Public Perceptions of Police Legitimacy" (2013) 51(1) *Criminology* 103.

3 Julia Evetts, "The Sociological Analysis of Professionalism: Occupational Change in the Modern World" (2003) 18(2) *International Sociology* 395; Mirko Noordegraaf, "Hybrid Professionalism and Beyond: (New) Forms of Public Professionalism in Changing Organizational and Societal Contexts" (2015) 2(2) *Journal of Professions and Organization* 187.

4 Julia Evetts, "The Sociological Analysis of Professionalism: Occupational Change in the Modern World" (2003) 18(2) *International Sociology* 395; Mirko Noordegraaf, "Hybrid Professionalism and Beyond: (New) Forms of Public Professionalism in Changing Organizational and Societal Contexts" (2015) 2(2) *Journal of Professions and Organization* 187.

5 Dorcas Quek Anderson, "The Evolving Concept of Access to Justice in Singapore's Mediation Movement" (2020) 16(2) *International Journal of Law in Context* 128.

6 Colquitt, J A, "On the Dimensionality of Organizational Justice: A Construct Validation of a Measure" (2001) 86(3) *Journal of Applied Psychology* 386; Avital Mentovich, JJ Prescott & Orna Rabinovich-Einy, "Legitimacy and Online Proceedings: Procedural Justice, Access to Justice, and the Role of Income" (2023) 57(2) *Law & Society Review* 189.

7 This article is written from the perspective of a trained community mediator rather than a legal practitioner: it foregrounds how design rules can preserve fairness signals and local legitimacy in practice while remaining within Singapore's lawful floor.

8 Susan T Fiske, Amy J C Cuddy & Peter Glick, "Universal Dimensions of Social Cognition: Warmth and Competence" (2007) 11(2) *Trends in Cognitive Sciences* 77; Jason Sunshine & Tom R Tyler, "The Role of Procedural Justice and Legitimacy in Shaping Public Support for Policing" (2003) 37(3) *Law & Society Review* 513; Justice Tankebe, "Viewing Things Differently: The Dimensions of Public Perceptions of Police Legitimacy" (2013) 51(1) *Criminology* 103.

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Box 1. Working definitions
(*Usage will be kept stable in this article*)

(a) **Warmth:** Visible care for personhood shown in the mediator's pacing, turn-taking, tone, and small courtesies.
(b) **Voice:** The sense that one's account was heard and taken into account in the next steps.
(c) **Local legitimacy:** To fit with community expectations of propriety, accessibility, and respect.
(d) **Lawful floor:** Non-negotiable duties and limits from statutes, rules, or protection mechanisms that agreements must not breach.

4 Legal habits can suppress these signals, yet the same habits are often needed to protect weaker parties and stabilise outcomes. Issue-narrowing reduces overwhelm.[9] Proof-seeking filters unsafe allegations. Rights-first framing clarifies boundaries where duties, tenancy rules, or protection orders apply.[10] The problem is not the habits themselves but their unreflective primacy when relationship repair and procedural dignity are central.

5 Singapore's ecosystem sharpens this tension. Community mediation[11] sits alongside agency pathways and, for certain disputes, the Community Disputes Resolution Tribunals ("CDRT").[12] Many volunteers have legal exposure, and many cases carry legal shadows even where no court proceedings have commenced. Mediators must hold two responsibilities at once: to steward a humane, participatory conversation, and ensure outcomes do not ignore relevant duties, safeguards, or lawful limits.[13]

6 This article's purpose is practical: to reconcile authority with authenticity. In this article, "authority" refers to the discipline that professionalisation brings, including clarity of role, ethical guardrails, and a shared craft vocabulary. "Authenticity" refers to having visible care for personhood, community texture, and the lived experience of the room. This article shows that mediation services can secure both authority and authenticity through small design choices made before, during, and after sessions.[14]

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9 Colquitt, J A, "On the Dimensionality of Organizational Justice: A Construct Validation of a Measure" (2001) 86(3) *Journal of Applied Psychology* 386.
10 Dorcas Quek Anderson, "The Evolving Concept of Access to Justice in Singapore's Mediation Movement" (2020) 16(2) *International Journal of Law in Context* 128.
11 "Community Mediation Centre", *Community Mediation Centre* <https://cmc.mlaw.gov.sg> (accessed 28 September 2026).
12 "File a Neighbour Dispute Claim", *Singapore Courts* <https://www.judiciary.gov.sg/civil/file-neighbour-dispute-claim> (accessed 28 September 2026).
13 Community Disputes Resolution Act 2015 (2020 Rev Ed) and Mediation Act 2017 (2020 Rev Ed).
14 Dorcas Quek Anderson, "A Matter of Interpretation? Understanding and Applying Mediation Standards for the Cross-Border Enforcement of Mediated Settlement

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7 This article translates these responsibilities into three design rules that mediation services can adopt with minimal cost.[15] The rules are developed in paras 24–41 of this article and are usable in any programme setting.

8 This article frames the analysis around three professional habits that are common in community rooms.[16] Issue-narrowing compresses stories into questions for decision. Proof-seeking prefers statements supported by documents or third-party confirmation. Rights-first framing orders discussion around entitlements and duties. None are wrong. The practical question for mediators is when and how to deploy them so that they reinforce rather than displace warmth, voice, and local legitimacy. This article therefore treats issue-narrowing, proof-seeking, and rights-first framing as necessary tools whose timing and dose can be adjusted by design.

9 This article's contribution is threefold. Conceptually, it articulates the professionalisation paradox as it appears in community rooms rather than in court-adjacent practice. Descriptively, it situates the paradox in Singapore's ecosystem and in comparable urban settings. Normatively, it offers a compact blueprint that consists of co-mediation with planned roles, rotation of the chair across phases, and a two-minute voice check before any caucus – and it derives the following testable propositions.[17]

Agreements" (2020) 38(1–2) *Conflict Resolution Quarterly* 27; Dorcas Quek Anderson, "The Importance of Ethics in the Practice of Mediation" [2021] Asian JM 27.

15 Krisztián Pósch, "Prying Open the Black Box of Causality: A Causal Mediation Analysis Test of Procedural Justice Policing" (2021) 37 *Journal of Quantitative Criminology* 217; Cathérine Van de Graaf, "Procedural Justice Perceptions in the Mediation of Discrimination Reports by a National Equality Body" (2020) 20(1) *International Journal of Discrimination and the Law* 45.

16 Cathérine Van de Graaf, "Procedural Justice Perceptions in the Mediation of Discrimination Reports by a National Equality Body" (2020) 20(1) *International Journal of Discrimination and the Law* 45; Marc Wever & Jan Fekke Ybema, "Procedural Justice and the Design of Administrative Dispute Resolution Procedures" (2024) 37 *Social Justice Research* 76.

17 Krisztián Pósch, "Prying Open the Black Box of Causality: A Causal Mediation Analysis Test of Procedural Justice Policing" (2021) 37 *Journal of Quantitative Criminology* 217.

Box 2. Propositions to be tested by practice

(a) **Proposition 1 (Sequencing):** When issue-narrowing and reality-testing follow a recognised participation phase, perceived fairness is higher than when they precede it.

(b) **Proposition 2 (Safeguard):** Mixed-background co-mediation with planned roles reduces the risk of power imbalances without suppressing voice, relative to single-mediator sessions where legal habits dominate.

(c) **Proposition 3 (Clarity):** Agreements that include specificity, verifiability, and a short review point exhibit greater early stability (*ie*, whether the agreement remains workable at the short follow-up points) than agreements drafted in general terms.

10 **Method and sources:** This is a conceptual, practice-led synthesis of four literatures: (a) procedural justice; (b) mediation and party self-determination; (c) professionalisation of human services; and (d) group facilitation in community and non-profit settings. The synthesis was written by a community mediator (not legally trained), drawing on direct practice experience and a review of statutory, doctrinal, and procedural justice sources. It is intended as normative guidance for mediation services rather than doctrinal interpretation. The author reviewed English-language publications and publicly available statutes and institutional guidance. The principal literature search focused on 1995 to 2025, while earlier legal sources were included where necessary to describe established frameworks. No field data was collected. The illustrative vignettes are synthetic composites. The aim is to provide normative guidance that yields testable propositions.[18]

11 **Related strands:** Four strands underpin the blueprint. The first strand is procedural justice work on voice, respectful treatment, and explanation. The second strand is mediation scholarship on self-determination and participation. The third strand is professionalisation studies that warn how institutional logics can narrow participation unless balanced. The fourth strand is group-facilitation guidance on phased leadership and explicit handovers. For Singapore, we refer to the Community Mediation Centre ("CMC"), the Community Disputes Resolution Act 2015,[19] and the CDRT as part of the lawful floor developed in paras 19–23 of this article.[20]

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18 Ray Pawson *et al*, "Realist Review – A New Method of Systematic Review Designed for Complex Policy Interventions" (2005) 10(1_suppl) *Journal of Health Services Research & Policy* 21; Joan Ernst Van Aken, "Management Research as a Design Science: Articulating the Research Products of Mode 2 Knowledge Production in Management" (2005) 16(1) *British Journal of Management* 19.

19 2020 Rev Ed.

20 Julia Evetts, "The Sociological Analysis of Professionalism: Occupational Change in the Modern World" (2003) 18(2) *International Sociology* 395; Lorraine Mazerolle *et al*, "Shaping Citizen Perceptions of Police Legitimacy: A Randomized Field Trial of Procedural Justice" (2013) 51(1) *Criminology* 33; Dorcas Quek Anderson, "The Evolving Concept of Access to Justice in Singapore's Mediation Movement" (2020) 16(2) *International Journal of Law in Context* 128.

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12 **Road map:** This article will:

(a) show where legal habits help, particularly to protect weaker parties and stabilise outcomes;[21]

(b) sketch the Singapore context and the lawful floor;[22]

(c) develop the three design rules (constituting the proposed blueprint) with boxes and scripts;[23]

(d) map the literature to each rule; and[24]

(e) close with limits and a short evaluation sketch of the proposed blueprint.[25]

II. Where legal habits help

13 Legal habits have a rightful place in community rooms.[26] Used with care, they improve safety, reduce confusion, and make agreements easier to follow. This section names where they are most protective so that later design rules can time and bound their use.

14 Issue-narrowing helps people who feel overwhelmed.[27] A short summary that extracts the workable questions lowers the temperature and shows that the room can move. Narrowing also separates topics that belong to different pathways, such as safety concerns that need a lawful response and neighbour irritants that can be handled through etiquette and routines.

15 Proof-seeking protects against unsafe or untestable claims. Asking what can be confirmed, what a third party has observed, or what documentary trail exists prevents agreements that rest on hearsay or pressure. It also reduces later disputes about who promised what by encouraging observable commitments.

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21 See paras 13–18 below.
22 See paras 19–23 below.
23 See paras 24–41 below.
24 See paras 42–51 below.
25 See paras 52–60 below.
26 Mirko Noordegraaf, "Hybrid Professionalism and Beyond: (New) Forms of Public Professionalism in Changing Organizational and Societal Contexts" (2015) 2(2) *Journal of Professions and Organization* 187.
27 Colquitt, J A, "On the Dimensionality of Organizational Justice: A Construct Validation of a Measure" (2001) 86(3) *Journal of Applied Psychology* 386; Iyengar, S S & Lepper, M R, "When Choice is Demotivating: Can One Desire Too Much of a Good Thing?" (2000) 79(6) *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 995.

16 Rights-first framing clarifies the lawful floor before negotiation starts.[28] Where protection orders, tenancy conditions, or public space by-laws set non-negotiable duties, naming them early protects weaker parties from trading safety for civility. Once the floor is clear, the conversation can return to participation, options, and workable routines.

> **Micro-Vignette 1: Issue-narrowing protects safety**
>
> M is a part-time cleaner caring for her mother, reporting abuse by an ex-partner who lives nearby. The neighbour dispute also features noise and corridor clutter. After the narrative, the chair names a safety thread and separates it from convenience issues. With the lawful floor in view, the team agrees on non-contact zones, time-bound messaging rules, and a simple check-in with the block's liaison officer. Only then do they tackle clutter and noise etiquette. Issue-narrowing protects non-negotiables and prevents M from being pressed to trade safety for civility. The closing summary reads back who does what, when, and how to raise concerns.

17 The risk is overuse. When the legal habits of narrowing, proof, and rights lead from the start, voice can fade and participation can stall. The design rules in paras 24–41 below exist to time and bound these habits so that mediators keep authority in view while preserving authenticity.

18 This article next sketches the Singapore lawful floor and adjacent pathways. With that context set, paras 24–41 below show how to sequence participation, narrowing, and drafting so that agreements are both humane and durable.[29]

III. Singapore context and implications

19 Singapore provides a clear lawful floor for community cases.[30] The CMC offers voluntary mediation and also conducts mediation where attendance has been directed under the Mediation Direction framework; the Community Disputes Resolution Act 2015[31] created the CDRT for defined neighbour disputes; and ministries have refreshed the Community Disputes Management Framework to strengthen early, community-based resolution. Paragraphs 20–23 below mark the boundaries so that later practice rules can sit comfortably within them.

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28 Housing and Development (Common Property and Open Spaces) Rules (1999 Rev Ed); Protection from Harassment Act 2014 (2020 Rev Ed).

29 "Community Disputes Management Framework", *Ministry of Culture, Community and Youth* (2 September 2026) <https://www.mccy.gov.sg/sectors/community/community-disputes-management-framework/> (accessed 28 September 2026); "Enhancements to the Community Disputes Management Framework", *Ministry of Law* (2024) <https://www.mlaw.gov.sg/files/news/press-releases/2024/CDMF_infographic_1R.pdf> (accessed 22 October 2026).

30 Community Disputes Resolution Act 2015 (2020 Rev Ed).

31 2020 Rev Ed.

20 Singapore's enhancements to its community mediation system from 2024 to 2026 promoted earlier community resolution and clearer next steps for residents. The Mediation Direction framework and Community Relations Unit were piloted in Tampines from April 2025 and expanded nationwide from 1 September 2026. A Mediation Direction requires attendance at the CMC; settlement nevertheless depends on the parties' agreement. At the CDRT, parties generally present their own cases, with lawyer representation requiring all parties' agreement and the Tribunal's permission. Eligible CMC settlement agreements signed or entered into on or after 1 September 2026 may, with all parties' written consent and subject to the applicable requirements and Tribunal approval, be registered as CDRT orders. This community-specific route is distinct from the court-recording mechanism under the Mediation Act 2017.[32] These developments reinforce the importance of specific, feasible and verifiable community agreements.[33]

21 Regionally, Hong Kong has long supported volunteer-based and government-linked pilots for building management and community mediation, including free schemes that deploy trained mediators and training for property management personnel.[34] These illustrate a public policy approach that normalises community mediation for everyday conflicts.

22 Malaysia's Department of National Unity has piloted community mediation within the Rukun Tetangga programme, training grassroots volunteers to defuse neighbourhood tensions, while the Philippines's barangay justice system requires local conciliation before many disputes can proceed to court. These ecosystems differ in design, yet share the aim of early, locally legitimate settlement.[35]

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32 2020 Rev Ed.

33 "Nationwide Enhancements to Facilitate Resolution of Neighbour Disputes", *Ministry of Law* (28 August 2026) <https://www.mlaw.gov.sg/nationwide-enhancements-to-facilitate-resolution-of-neighbour-disputes/> (accessed 14 October 2026); "Community Disputes Management Framework", *Ministry of Culture, Community and Youth* (2 September 2026) <https://www.mccy.gov.sg/sectors/community/community-disputes-management-framework/> (accessed 14 October 2026); "Register a Settlement Agreement (for CDRT)", *Singapore Courts* (1 September 2026) <https://www.judiciary.gov.sg/civil/community-neighbour-dispute-claims/register-a-settlement-agreement> (accessed 14 October 2026); Community Disputes Resolution Act 2015 (2020 Rev Ed); Mediation Act 2017 (2020 Rev Ed).

34 "Pilot Scheme on Community Mediation", *Department of Justice, The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region* (17 July 2025) <https://www.doj.gov.hk/mediatefirst/en/capital_of_mediation/pilot_scheme_on_community_mediation.html> (accessed 28 September 2026); Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, Department of Justice, *Pilot Scheme on Community Mediation* (Legislative Council Panel on Administration of Justice and Legal Services, LC Paper No CB(2)1027/2025(03), 2 June 2025).

35 Local Government Code of 1991 (Republic Act No 7160) (Philippines) Ch VII (*ie*, the *Katarungang Pambarangay* provisions); "Mediator Komuniti", *Kementerian Perpaduan Negara, Jabatan Perpaduan Negara dan Integrasi Nasional* <https://www.jpnin.gov.my/web/mediator-komuniti> (accessed 28 September 2026); Supreme Court of the Philippines, Administrative Circular No 14–93, "Guidelines On the Katarungang Pambarangay Conciliation Procedure to Prevent Circumvention of the Revised

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23 This article uses the term "lawful floor" to refer to these guardrails: community pathways that prioritise mediation, including directed attendance where applicable, and a tribunal backstop that is simple, local, and largely self-represented, with routes for eligible mediated settlements to acquire the force of CDRT orders in suitable cases. With this floor set, paras 24–41 turn to design rules that keep voice visible while protecting weaker parties.[36]

Box 3. Singapore's lawful floor at a glance

(a) **Community Disputes Management Framework (CDMF):** Established in 2014 and enhanced through the 2024 reforms. Following the Tampines pilot from April 2025, the Mediation Direction framework and Community Relations Unit expanded nationwide from 1 September 2026. Attendance at mediation may be required in suitable cases, while settlement remains consensual.[37]

(b) **Community Disputes Resolution Tribunals (CDRT):** Statutory forum for defined neighbour disputes under the Community Disputes Resolution Act 2015.[38] Parties generally appear without lawyers. Counsel may appear only if all parties agree and the Tribunal permits it.

(c) **Community Mediation Centre (CMC) settlement agreements:** Eligible agreements signed or entered into on or after 1 September 2026 may be registered as CDRT orders with all parties' written consent, subject to the applicable requirements and Tribunal approval.[39]

Katarungang Pambarangay Law (Sections 399–422, Chapter VII, Title I, Book III, R.A. 7170. Otherwise Known As the Local Government Code of 1991)" <https://lawphil.net/courts/supreme/ac/ac_14_1993.html> (accessed 28 September 2026).

36 "Community Disputes Management Framework", *Ministry of Culture, Community and Youth* (2 September 2026) <https://www.mccy.gov.sg/sectors/community/community-disputes-management-framework/> (accessed 14 October 2026); "Nationwide Enhancements to Facilitate Resolution of Neighbour Disputes", *Ministry of Law* (28 August 2026) <https://www.mlaw.gov.sg/nationwide-enhancements-to-facilitate-resolution-of-neighbour-disputes/> (accessed 14 October 2026); "Register a Settlement Agreement (for CDRT)", *Singapore Courts* (1 September 2026) <https://www.judiciary.gov.sg/civil/community-neighbour-dispute-claims/register-a-settlement-agreement> (accessed 14 October 2026); Mediation Act 2017 (2020 Rev Ed).

37 "Nationwide Enhancements to Facilitate Resolution of Neighbour Disputes", *Ministry of Law* (28 August 2026) <https://www.mlaw.gov.sg/nationwide-enhancements-to-facilitate-resolution-of-neighbour-disputes/> (accessed 14 October 2026); "Community Disputes Management Framework", *Ministry of Culture, Community and Youth* (2 September 2026) <https://www.mccy.gov.sg/sectors/community/community-disputes-management-framework/> (accessed 14 October 2026).

38 2020 Rev Ed.

39 "Register a Settlement Agreement (for CDRT)", *Singapore Courts* (1 September 2026) <https://www.judiciary.gov.sg/civil/community-neighbour-dispute-claims/register-a-settlement-agreement> (accessed 14 October 2026).

(d) **Mediation Act 2017:**[40] Court recording of mediated settlements is possible where gateway conditions are met. Designated providers presently include the Singapore International Mediation Centre, the Singapore Mediation Centre, the Tripartite Alliance for Dispute Management, and the WIPO Arbitration and Mediation Center. An approved certification scheme is administered by the Singapore International Mediation Institute.

Practical implications: Most community cases should aim for clear, feasible, and verifiable agreements at the service level. Court recording is a limited pathway for suitable cases and is not a substitute for specificity and dignity in the room.

Practice cue: *Check the gateway early if parties ask about court recording; otherwise, prioritise specific, feasible, verifiable steps and a short review point at service level.*

IV. Blueprint: three programme-neutral fixes

24 Paragraphs 25–41 below set out three programme-neutral design rules that keep voice visible while protecting weaker parties. The rules are lightweight, low cost, and usable by volunteer-anchored and hybrid mediation services.

A. Co-mediation with planned roles

25 **Evidence base and rationale:** Programme reviews and the author's mediation practice experience suggest that planned co-mediation with mediators of complementary backgrounds improves participation, particularly where one voice might otherwise dominate. Co-mediation also allows the team to separate rapport-building from rights awareness without turning the session into a legal exercise.[41]

26 **Plan the roles before the session:** One mediator serves as the chair for openings, turn-taking, and timekeeping. The other is the rapport lead, tracking emotion, translation needs, and non-verbal cues. Both mediators summarise, but only one writes on the board or captures draft text at any time. Agree in advance on a neutral phrase that the rapport lead can use to bring about a pause for safety or clarity without signalling blame.[42]

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40 2020 Rev Ed.

41 Jay B Carson, Paul E Tesluk & Jennifer A Marrone, "Shared Leadership in Teams: An Investigation of Antecedent Conditions and Performance" (2007) 50(5) *Academy of Management Journal* 1217; Wang, D, Waldman, D A & Zhang, Z, "A Meta-Analysis of Shared Leadership and Team Effectiveness" (2014) 99(2) *Journal of Applied Psychology* 181; Joel Lee, "The Enforceability of Mediation Clauses in Singapore" [1999] Sing JLS 229; Dorcas Quek Anderson, "The Importance of Ethics in the Practice of Mediation" [2021] Asian JM 27.

42 Steve W J Kozlowski & Daniel R Ilgen, "Enhancing the Effectiveness of Work Groups and Teams" (2006) 7(3) *Psychological Science in the Public Interest* 77; Selma van der

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27 **Pair across strengths:**[43] Examples include a legally trained mediator paired with a community worker, a bilingual mediator paired with a partner who has safeguarding experience, or a senior volunteer paired with a newer colleague. When pairing across language, decide who will translate and who will chair so that the need to translate does not silence the other mediator.

28 Guard against mediator-to-mediator talk and ensure that party-to-party dialogue remains primary. Use short, neutral handovers and summarise in the parties' own words. Do not allow mediator discussion to replace party dialogue.[44]

29 Close the co-mediation with a single-voice readback of what has been agreed on, the next small steps to be taken, the point in time for a short review, and how to raise concerns in the interval.[45]

B. Rotate chair across phases

30 **Evidence base and rationale:** Group-facilitation research and practice indicate that intentional handovers sustain participation across phases. Rotating the chair at defined points avoids a single style dominating the whole room and makes the process structure visible.[46]

31 Use rotation at three natural moments, *ie*, when moving from: (a) opening to narrative; (b) narrative to options; and (c) options to drafting. Each handover is short and announces what comes next. The scripts below keep attention on the parties and on the work of the next phase. See Box 4 for the scripts.[47]

Haar *et al*, "Team Leader Structuring for Team Effectiveness and Team Learning in Command-and-Control Teams" (2017) 48(2) *Small Group Research* 215.

43 Suzanne T Bell *et al*, "Getting Specific about Demographic Diversity Variable and Team Performance Relationships: A Meta-analysis" (2011) 37(3) *Journal of Management* 709; John E Mathieu *et al*, "Embracing Complexity: Reviewing the Past Decade of Team Effectiveness Research" (2019) 6 *Annual Review of Organizational Psychology and Organizational Behavior* 17.

44 James A Wall & Timothy C Dunne, "Mediation Research: A Current Review" (2012) 28(2) *Negotiation Journal* 217; Nancy A Welsh, "Making Deals in Court-Connected Mediation: What's Justice Got to Do with It?" (2001) 79(3) *Washington University Law Quarterly* 787.

45 Mandhkani Mahajan *et al*, "The Impact of Teach-back on Patient Recall and Understanding of Discharge Information in the Emergency Department: The Emergency Teach-Back (EM-TeBa) Study" (2020) 13 *International Journal of Emergency Medicine* 49; Dean Schillinger *et al*, "Closing the Loop: Physician Communication with Diabetic Patients who have Low Health Literacy" (2003) 163(1) *Archives of Internal Medicine* 83.

46 Sayani Ghosh, Lakshmi Ramamoorthy & Biju Pottakat, "Impact of Structured Clinical Handover Protocol on Communication and Patient Satisfaction" (2021) 8 *Journal of Patient Experience*; Mieke Koeslag-Kreunen *et al*, "When Leadership Powers Team Learning: A Meta-Analysis" (2018) 49(4) *Small Group Research* 475.

47 DeChurch, L A & Mesmer-Magnus, J R, "The Cognitive Underpinnings of Effective Teamwork: A Meta-Analysis" (2010) 95(1) *Journal of Applied Psychology* 32; Namkje

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Box 4. Chair-rotation scripts	
Handover	**Script** ***Note:*** *Rotate only at natural pauses and never while a vulnerable party is finally speaking freely.*
Opening → Narrative	"Thank you for coming. We will now spend time understanding what matters to each of you. [Name] will guide this part."
Narrative → Options	"Here is what I have heard from both of you. To see what might work, [Name] will help us list practical options on the board."
Options → Drafting	"We have two workable paths. To capture what you have agreed, [Name] will help us write this clearly so it is easy to follow later."

32 Do not rotate while a vulnerable party is finally speaking freely, or while a party's safety or dignity is at risk. Delay the handover until a natural pause and acknowledge the contribution before switching chairs.[48]

C. Audit: two-minute voice check before any caucus

33 **Evidence base and rationale:** Validated procedural justice measures routinely ask whether people were able to express themselves and whether the process was explained. A brief, visible check mirrors these ideas and helps prevent a premature caucus.[49]

34 Administer the check after first-round stories and mediator summaries. Ask each party to give quick scores from 0 to 2 on five items:

(a) "I have said the things that matter to me."

(b) "The mediators reflected my main concerns accurately."

(c) "I understand what this process can and cannot do."

Koudenburg, Tom Postmes & Ernestine H Gordijn, "Conversational Flow Promotes Solidarity" (2013) 8(11) *PLoS ONE* e78363; Jeffery A LePine *et al*, "A Meta-Analysis of Teamwork Processes: Tests of a Multidimensional Model and Relationships with Team Effectiveness Criteria" (2008) 61(2) *Personnel Psychology* 273.

48 Brockner, J & Wiesenfeld, B M, "An Integrative Framework for Explaining Reactions to Decisions: Interactive Effects of Outcomes and Procedures" (1996) 120(2) *Psychological Bulletin* 189; Tom R Tyler & Steven L Blader, "The Group Engagement Model: Procedural Justice, Social Identity, and Cooperative Behavior" (2003) 7(4) *Personality and Social Psychology Review* 349.

49 Colquitt, J A, "On the Dimensionality of Organizational Justice: A Construct Validation of a Measure" (2001) 86(3) *Journal of Applied Psychology* 386; Lorraine Mazerolle *et al*, "Shaping Citizen Perceptions of Police Legitimacy: A Randomized Field Trial of Procedural Justice" (2013) 51(1) *Criminology* 33.

(d) "I know what I need from the other party today."

(e) "I feel safe and ready to continue."

If a score is 0, repair the problem in the room before proposing a caucus.[50]

35 This checklist is a practice heuristic derived from validated procedural justice items rather than a validated instrument. It has an evident conceptual correspondence with established measures of procedural justice[51] and related constructs, including expression, respectful treatment, accuracy of consideration and explanation. The mapping is straightforward:[52]

(a) "I have said the things that matter to me." → Voice.

(b) "The mediators reflected my main concerns accurately." → Respectful treatment and accuracy.

(c) "I understand what this process can and cannot do." → Explanation and clarity.

(d) "I know what I need from the other party today." → Goal clarity.

(e) "I feel safe and ready to continue." → Psychological safety.

Do not read out individual sub-scores; simply repair the item that scored 0.

36 **Worked example:** After first-round stories, Party A scores 0 on "The mediators reflected my main concerns accurately." The second mediator summarises Party A's concerns using Party A's words, checks the summary with Party A for accuracy, and invites one correction. Party A's rescored item is 2, and the total rises from 5 to 7. The team stays in joint session, postpones the caucus, and moves to options. Only the five audit sub-scores and the time taken to complete the voice check are tallied for aggregate internal review by the mediation service.[53]

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50 Jacinta M Gau, "The Convergent and Discriminant Validity of Procedural Justice and Police Legitimacy: An Empirical Test of Core Theoretical Propositions" (2011) 39(6) *Journal of Criminal Justice* 489; Mike Hough *et al*, "Procedural Justice, Trust, and Institutional Legitimacy" (2010) 4(3) *Policing: A Journal of Policy and Practice* 203.

51 Colquitt, J A, "On the Dimensionality of Organizational Justice: A Construct Validation of a Measure" (2001) 86(3) *Journal of Applied Psychology* 386.

52 Amy Edmondson, "Psychological Safety and Learning Behavior in Work Teams" (1999) 44(2) *Administrative Science Quarterly* 350; Jian Liang, Crystal I C Farh & Jiing-Lih Farh, "Psychological Antecedents of Promotive and Prohibitive Voice: A Two-Wave Examination" (2012) 55(1) *Academy of Management Journal* 71; Locke, E A & Latham, G P, "Building a Practically Useful Theory of Goal Setting and Task Motivation: A 35-year Odyssey" (2002) 57(9) *American Psychologist* 705.

53 Colquitt, J A *et al*, "Justice at the Millennium: A Meta-Analytic Review of 25 Years of Organizational Justice Research" (2001) 86(3) *Journal of Applied Psychology* 425.

Box 5. Two-minute voice check

Items to score quickly from 0 to 2 after first-round summaries:

(a) I have said the things that matter to me.
(b) The mediators reflected my main concerns accurately.
(c) I understand what this process can and cannot do.
(d) I know what I need from the other party today.
(e) I feel safe and ready to continue.

Note: This is a practice heuristic derived from validated items. It is not a validated instrument. Only the five sub-scores and time taken to complete the voice check are tallied.

Micro-Vignette 2: The audit prevents a premature caucus

Two neighbours arrive, tense. After each story and a mediator summary, the chair proposes a caucus. The two-minute voice check shows one party scoring 5/10, with the response "not yet" on "The mediators reflected my main concerns accurately." The second mediator mirrors the party's phrasing and checks understanding in the open. The score rises to 8/10, and the caucus is postponed. Options are then generated together. A later private meeting is shorter and calmer because the party felt participation has already been repaired.

D. Putting the three together

37 **Sequence matters:**[54] Start with engendering participation and shared understanding. Only then move to narrowing and options, and finish with clear drafting and providing a short review point. The design rules work as a set: planned co-mediation supports accurate summaries, rotation keeps the style fresh and visible, and the voice check prevents a premature split. See Box 6 for the sequencing and Box 7 for the agreement quality rubric.

Box 6. Sequencing rules at a glance

(*See Proposition 1 (Sequencing) in Box 2*)[55]

Phase 1: Participation and shared understanding

(a) Open, set ground rules, and invite each story without interruption.
(b) Summarise in the parties' own phrasing.
(c) Run the two-minute voice check before any private meeting.
(d) If any item scores 0, repair the problem in the room first.

54 Curhan, J R, Elfenbein, H A & Xu, H, "What Do People Value When They Negotiate? Mapping the Domain of Subjective Value in Negotiation" (2006) 91(3) *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 493; Trötschel, R *et al*, "Perspective Taking as a Means to Overcome Motivational Barriers in Negotiations: When Putting Oneself Into the Opponent's Shoes Helps to Walk Toward Agreements" (2011) 101(4) *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 771.

55 See para 9 above.

Phase 2: Narrowing and options
(a) Identify the workable questions and separate safety issues from convenience issues.
(b) List options jointly and test for fit with daily routines.
(c) Keep handovers short and neutral when rotating the chair.
Phase 3: Drafting and short review point
(a) Capture agreements in plain language that parties can repeat.
(b) Insert a review point two to six weeks out and a simple contact path.
(c) Do not rotate while a vulnerable party is finally speaking freely.

Box 7. Agreement quality rubric (use at the close of the session)

Trait	What to write	Quick check
Specificity	Who does what, where, and when, in everyday words.	Could a person who was not present at the mediation understand who must do what, where and when?
Feasibility	Steps that are within each party's control and capacity. Note constraints such as shift work or caregiving.	Can each party actually do this as written?
Verifiability	Observable behaviours; add a simple evidence step only if helpful.	Will whether it happened be clear?
Reviewability	A short review point (2–6 weeks) and how to raise concerns.	Do both parties know when and how to check in? State the review date in the agreement and how the parties will confirm it (*eg*, "Phone call at 7pm on 14 October; if no answer, WhatsApp message by 9pm.")

38 **Training and cost:** Teams can adopt the three rules with a half-day practice session: with 60min to plan roles and chair scripts, 60min to practise handovers, and 60min to rehearse the voice check and tally sheet. No new software is required. A one-page aide-mémoire and two short practice runs *per* mediator are usually sufficient.[56] In summary, the micro-agenda is as follows:

(a) plan roles and chair scripts (60min);

(b) practise two handovers *per* mediator (60min); and

56 Arthur, W, Jr *et al*, "Effectiveness of Training in Organizations: A Meta-Analysis of Design and Evaluation Features" (2003) 88(2) *Journal of Applied Psychology* 234; Eduardo Salas *et al*, "Does Team Training Improve Team Performance? A Meta-Analysis" (2008) 50(6) *Human Factors: The Journal of the Human Factors and Ergonomics Society* 903.

(c) rehearse the voice check with tally sheet (60min).

39 **Recording and learning:** At service level, tally only the five audit sub-scores *per* party and the time taken to complete the voice check. Apply the agreement-quality rubric at the close. For a small sample of cases, conduct brief calls 14 and 45 days after the session using simple outcome questions. Do not store personal content. Use tallies to improve timing and handovers, not to score parties or mediators.[57]

40 **Safeguards:** Use the lawful floor to mark non-negotiables early. If safety is in question, pause the session and seek advice according to programme policy. When rotating chairs, stop if a vulnerable party is finally speaking freely. In co-mediation, if one mediator must step out for safety reasons or to obtain translation assistance, this should be stated neutrally and the co-mediator should provide a summary of the discussion on the mediator's return.[58]

41 **Practice takeaway:** The three rules are intentionally modest.[59] They help teams keep authority and authenticity in view, protect weaker parties without silencing them, and produce agreements that are specific, feasible, verifiable, and easy to review. Paragraphs 42–51 below will now connect each rule to the strongest strands of published research.

V. What the published research already shows

A. Why "voice" and dignified process matter

42 This section distils what published research already shows and ties it to the three practice rules. This article keeps to the strongest strands and a compact set of citations so that the line from research to field use stays clear.

43 Procedural justice studies consistently report that felt voice, respectful treatment, and clear explanation predict higher perceptions of fairness and acceptance of outcomes, including in lower-stakes, everyday

57 Noah Ivers *et al*, "Audit and Feedback: Effects on Professional Practice and Healthcare Outcomes" (2012) 2012(6) *Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews* CD000259; Michael J Taylor *et al*, "Systematic Review of the Application of the Plan–do–study-act Method to Improve Quality in Healthcare" (2014) 23(4) *BMJ Quality & Safety* 290.

58 Housing and Development (Common Property and Open Spaces) Rules (1999 Rev Ed); Protection from Harassment Act 2014 (2020 Rev Ed).

59 Charlotte Gill *et al*, "Community-Oriented Policing to Reduce Crime, Disorder and Fear and Increase Satisfaction and Legitimacy Among Citizens: A Systematic Review" (2014) 10 *Journal of Experimental Criminology* 399; David Weisburd *et al*, "Reforming the Police Through Procedural Justice Training: A Multicity Randomized Trial at Crime Hot Spots" (2022) 119(14) *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America* e2118780119.

disputes.[60] The most transferable items ask whether people said what mattered, whether decision makers reflected main concerns accurately, and whether the process was explained in plain language. These findings justify a visible participation phase and a brief check before any split into private meetings.

44 Mediation scholarship on party self-determination and participation warns that over-structuring can erode ownership of outcomes. Voice is strengthened when summaries use the parties' own phrasing, when option-generation is genuinely joint, and when the caucus is used sparingly and for a clear purpose. These insights support planned co-mediation, careful summaries, and a default preference for joint work before private meetings.[61] The rules here operationalise party participation in the joint session and use the caucus sparingly for a defined purpose, aligning with facilitative practice while maintaining a clear lawful floor.

45 Work on professionalisation in human services shows how institutional logics can crowd out community voice if left unchecked. Standardisation improves reliability, yet it can import legal habits that narrow participation. The mediator's task is to provide a balance: to retain safeguards while preventing the session from becoming a legal exercise. This is the role of the three rules as programme-neutral guardrails.[62]

46 Group-facilitation research supports phased leadership, explicit handovers, and clarity about roles. Handovers refresh attention, reduce dominance by a single style, and make the structure of work visible. Where two facilitators plan roles and rehearse scripts, participation is steadier and summaries are more accurate. This literature underscores the benefits of chair rotation and planned co-mediation.[63]

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60 Lorraine Mazerolle *et al*, "Shaping Citizen Perceptions of Police Legitimacy: A Randomized Field Trial of Procedural Justice" (2013) 51(1) *Criminology* 33; Glenn D Walters & P Colin Bolger, "Procedural Justice Perceptions, Legitimacy Beliefs, and Compliance With the Law: A Meta-Analysis" (2019) 15(3) *Journal of Experimental Criminology* 341.

61 Ryan, R M & Deci, E L, "Self-Determination Theory and the Facilitation of Intrinsic Motivation, Social Development, and Well-Being" (2000) 55(1) *American Psychologist* 68; James A Wall & Timothy C Dunne, "Mediation Research: A Current Review" (2012) 28(2) *Negotiation Journal* 217.

62 Evelyn Z Brodkin, "Policy Work: Street-level Organizations Under New Managerialism" (2011) 21(suppl_2) *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory* i253; Julia Evetts, "The Sociological Analysis of Professionalism: Occupational Change in the Modern World" (2003) 18(2) *International Sociology* 395; Mirko Noordegraaf, "Hybrid Professionalism and Beyond: (New) Forms of Public Professionalism in Changing Organizational and Societal Contexts" (2015) 2(2) *Journal of Professions and Organization* 187.

63 DeChurch, L A & Mesmer-Magnus, J R, "The Cognitive Underpinnings of Effective Teamwork: A Meta-Analysis" (2010) 95(1) *Journal of Applied Psychology* 32; Namkje Koudenburg, Tom Postmes & Ernestine H Gordijn, "Conversational Flow Promotes Solidarity" (2013) 8(11) *PLoS ONE* e78363; Jeffery A LePine *et al*, "A Meta-Analysis of

(cont'd on the next page)

47 Asia-centred practice sources echo these patterns. Volunteer-anchored schemes in Hong Kong and Malaysia report better uptake and early settlement when sessions make space for narrative before narrowing. The Philippines's barangay justice system shows how local legitimacy supports compliance when agreements are specific, observable, and easy to review. Singapore's experience fits this regional picture while adding a clear lawful floor. These comparisons justify a blueprint that travels across diverse Asian community settings.[64]

48 Taken together, these strands support the three propositions (as set out in Box 2 at para 9 above) directly. Proposition 1 (Sequencing) is grounded in procedural justice and facilitation work that link perceived fairness to visible participation followed by narrowing and options. Proposition 2 (Safeguard) is grounded in professionalisation and mediation studies that show how co-mediation with planned roles can protect weaker parties without muting voice. Proposition 3 (Clarity) follows from agreement-quality research and practice reports that link specificity, verifiability, and a short review point to early stability.[65] This article recognises the limits when transferring findings from policing-centred procedural justice studies to neighbour disputes, so the checklist here is kept diagnostic rather than evaluative and is used to guide repair, not to grade performance.

49 This article therefore reads the literatures not as prescriptions for a single model but as converging cues for practice design. The rules here are small, teachable moves that express what these strands already make plausible in community rooms.[66]

50 This is a practice synthesis rather than a systematic review, and it relies on English-language and Singapore-anchored sources with Asia-regional supplements. The voice checklist is a heuristic derived from validated items, not a validated instrument. The claims in this article are

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Teamwork Processes: Tests of a Multidimensional Model and Relationships with Team Effectiveness Criteria" (2008) 61(2) *Personnel Psychology* 273.

64 "Pilot Scheme on Community Mediation", *Department of Justice, The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region* (17 July 2025) <https://www.doj.gov.hk/mediatefirst/en/capital_of_mediation/pilot_scheme_on_community_mediation.html> (accessed 28 September 2026); "Community Disputes Management Framework", *Ministry of Culture, Community and Youth* (2 September 2026) <https://www.mccy.gov.sg/sectors/community/community-disputes-management-framework/> (accessed 28 September 2026).

65 E J Masicampo & Roy F Baumeister, "Consider It Done! Plan Making Can Eliminate the Cognitive Effects of Unfulfilled Goals" (2011) 101(4) *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 667; Glenn D Walters & P Colin Bolger, "Procedural Justice Perceptions, Legitimacy Beliefs, and Compliance With the Law: A Meta-Analysis" (2019) 15(3) *Journal of Experimental Criminology* 341.

66 Ray Pawson *et al*, "Realist Review – A New Method of Systematic Review Designed for Complex Policy Interventions" (2005) 10(1_suppl) *Journal of Health Services Research & Policy* 21; Joan Ernst Van Aken, "Management Research as a Design Science: Articulating the Research Products of Mode 2 Knowledge Production in Management" (2005) 16(1) *British Journal of Management* 19.

therefore modest and framed as propositions for testing by mediation services in ordinary practice.[67]

51 The literatures justify a sequenced method that reconciles authority with authenticity: planned co-mediation, chair rotation across phases, and a brief voice check before any caucus. Paragraphs 52–60 of this article, *ie*, the conclusion, state the article's contribution, its limits, and a simple method for evaluating the blueprint in practice that mediation services can adopt.[68]

VI. Conclusion

52 Community mediation benefits from professional habits that stabilise outcomes, yet those same habits can mute warmth, voice, and local legitimacy if they lead the room. This article names that tension and offers a compact blueprint that keeps voice visible while protecting weaker parties.[69]

53 Anchored in Singapore's lawful floor and adjacent pathways, the blueprint can travel to other Asian community settings where mediation services are volunteer-anchored or hybrid. It keeps participation primary, locates non-negotiables early, and produces agreements that people can follow the next day.[70]

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67 James R Detert & Ethan R Burris, "Leadership Behavior and Employee Voice: Is the Door Really Open?" (2007) 50(4) *Academy of Management Journal* 869; Amy Edmondson, "Psychological Safety and Learning Behavior in Work Teams" (1999) 44(2) *Administrative Science Quarterly* 350; Jian Liang, Crystal I C Farh & Jiing-Lih Farh, "Psychological Antecedents of Promotive and Prohibitive Voice: A Two-Wave Examination" (2012) 55(1) *Academy of Management Journal* 71.

68 Krisztián Pósch, "Prying Open the Black Box of Causality: A Causal Mediation Analysis Test of Procedural Justice Policing" (2021) 37 *Journal of Quantitative Criminology* 217; Dorcas Quek Anderson, "The Evolving Concept of Access to Justice in Singapore's Mediation Movement" (2020) 16(2) *International Journal of Law in Context* 128.

69 Brockner, J & Wiesenfeld, B M, "An Integrative Framework for Explaining Reactions to Decisions: Interactive Effects of Outcomes and Procedures" (1996) 120(2) *Psychological Bulletin* 189; Tom R Tyler & Steven L Blader, "The Group Engagement Model: Procedural Justice, Social Identity, and Cooperative Behavior" (2003) 7(4) *Personality and Social Psychology Review* 349.

70 "Pilot Scheme on Community Mediation", *Department of Justice, The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region* (17 July 2025) <https://www.doj.gov.hk/mediatefirst/en/capital_of_mediation/pilot_scheme_on_community_mediation.html> (accessed 28 September 2026); "Mediator Komuniti", *Kementerian Perpaduan Negara, Jabatan Perpaduan Negara dan Integrasi Nasional* <https://www.jpnin.gov.my/web/mediator-komuniti> (accessed 28 September 2026); "Community Disputes Management Framework", *Ministry of Culture, Community and Youth* (2 September 2026) <https://www.mccy.gov.sg/sectors/community/community-disputes-management-framework/> (accessed 28 September 2026); Supreme Court of the Philippines, Administrative Circular No 14–93, "Guidelines On the Katarungang Pambarangay Conciliation Procedure to Prevent Circumvention of the Revised Katarungang Pambarangay Law" <https://lawphil.net/courts/supreme/ac/ac_14_1993.html> (accessed 28 September 2026).

54 The blueprint reflects a practitioner's attempt to reconcile authority with authenticity in community rooms, inviting both academic and policy partners to test and refine these rules in practice.

55 This article's contribution is threefold. Conceptually, it describes the professionalisation paradox as it appears in community rooms. Descriptively, it situates the paradox in Singapore with brief regional points. Normatively, it proposes three programme-neutral rules: (a) mixed-background co-mediation with planned roles; (b) rotation of the chair across phases; and (c) a two-minute voice check before any caucus.[71]

56 The three propositions to guide practice and study in this article are restated as follows:[72]

(a) Proposition 1 (Sequencing): Perceived fairness is higher when participation and shared understanding come first, then narrowing and options, then clear drafting and a short review point.

(b) Proposition 2 (Safeguard): planned co-mediation reduces the risk of power imbalances without suppressing voice.

(c) Proposition 3 (Clarity): Agreements that are specific, verifiable, and reviewable show greater early stability.

57 **Evaluation sketch of the blueprint:** A light evaluation can be run within 90 days[73] using the built-in tally and three short follow-up questions. Tally the five audit sub-scores per party and the time taken to complete the voice check. Apply the four-point agreement-quality rubric at the close of the session. For a small sample of cases, conduct brief calls at 14 and 45 days after the session with three questions ("Were the steps clear?"; "Was anything important left unsaid?"; and "Is the agreement still working as written?"). Record only categorical responses (*eg*, "yes", "no", or "unclear") without recording names. Use only aggregate numbers for internal learning, avoid storing narrative content, and compare the proportion of agreements reported as still workable before and after adoption, using the same follow-up questions and timing.

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71 Krisztián Pósch, "Prying Open the Black Box of Causality: A Causal Mediation Analysis Test of Procedural Justice Policing" (2021) 37 *Journal of Quantitative Criminology* 217; Wang, D, Waldman, D A & Zhang, Z, "A Meta-Analysis of Shared Leadership and Team Effectiveness" (2014) 99(2) *Journal of Applied Psychology* 181.

72 Locke, E A & Latham, G P, "Building a Practically Useful Theory of Goal Setting and Task Motivation: A 35 year Odyssey" (2002) 57(9) *American Psychologist* 705; E J Masicampo & Roy F Baumeister, "Consider It Done! Plan Making Can Eliminate the Cognitive Effects of Unfulfilled Goals" (2011) 101(4) *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 667.

73 Greg Ogrinc *et al*, "SQUIRE 2.0 (*Standards for QUality Improvement Reporting Excellence)*: Revised Publication Guidelines From a Detailed Consensus Process" (2016) 25(12) *BMJ Quality & Safety* 986; Michael J Taylor *et al*, "Systematic Review of the Application of the Plan–do–study–act Method to Improve Quality in Healthcare" (2014) 23(4) *BMJ Quality & Safety* 290.

58 **Ethics and data:** No human participants were recruited for the writing of this article, and no personal data was collected or stored. The illustrative vignettes are composites written to avoid identification. The suggested tally (five audit sub-scores and time taken) does not capture narrative content and can be recorded without personal identifiers.

59 **Limits:** This article is a practice synthesis based on English-language and Singapore-anchored sources. The voice checklist is a heuristic derived from validated items, not a validated instrument. The claims in this article are therefore modest and intended to invite practice-based study rather than to close debate.[74]

60 **Practice takeaway:** The three rules are small, teachable moves that reconcile authority with authenticity in community rooms. They make participation visible, protect non-negotiables, and yield agreements that are specific, feasible, verifiable, and easy to review. Mediation services are invited to adapt the blueprint, report what they learn, and help build an Asia-centred evidence base.[75]

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74 Amy Edmondson, "Psychological Safety and Learning Behavior in Work Teams" (1999) 44(2) *Administrative Science Quarterly* 350; Jian Liang, Crystal I C Farh & Jiing-Lih Farh, "Psychological Antecedents of Promotive and Prohibitive Voice: A Two-Wave Examination" (2012) 55(1) *Academy of Management Journal* 71; Elizabeth Wolfe Morrison, "Employee Voice and Silence: Taking Stock a Decade Later" (2023) 10 *Annual Review of Organizational Psychology and Organizational Behavior* 79.

75 "Community Disputes Management Framework", *Ministry of Culture, Community and Youth* (2 September 2026) <https://www.mccy.gov.sg/sectors/community/community-disputes-management-framework/> (accessed 28 September 2026); Glenn D Walters & P Colin Bolger, "Procedural Justice Perceptions, Legitimacy Beliefs, and Compliance With the Law: A Meta-Analysis" (2019) 15(3) *Journal of Experimental Criminology* 341.