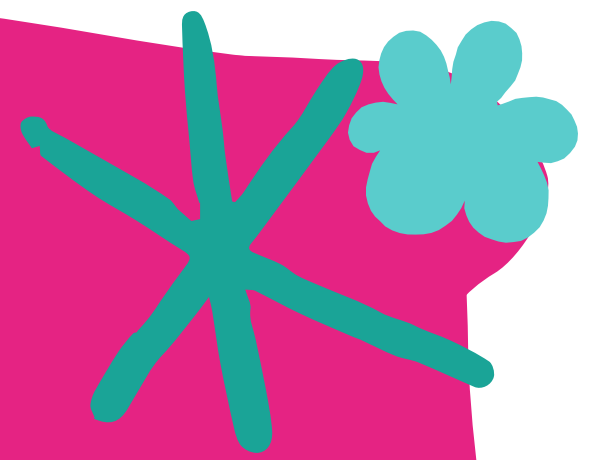


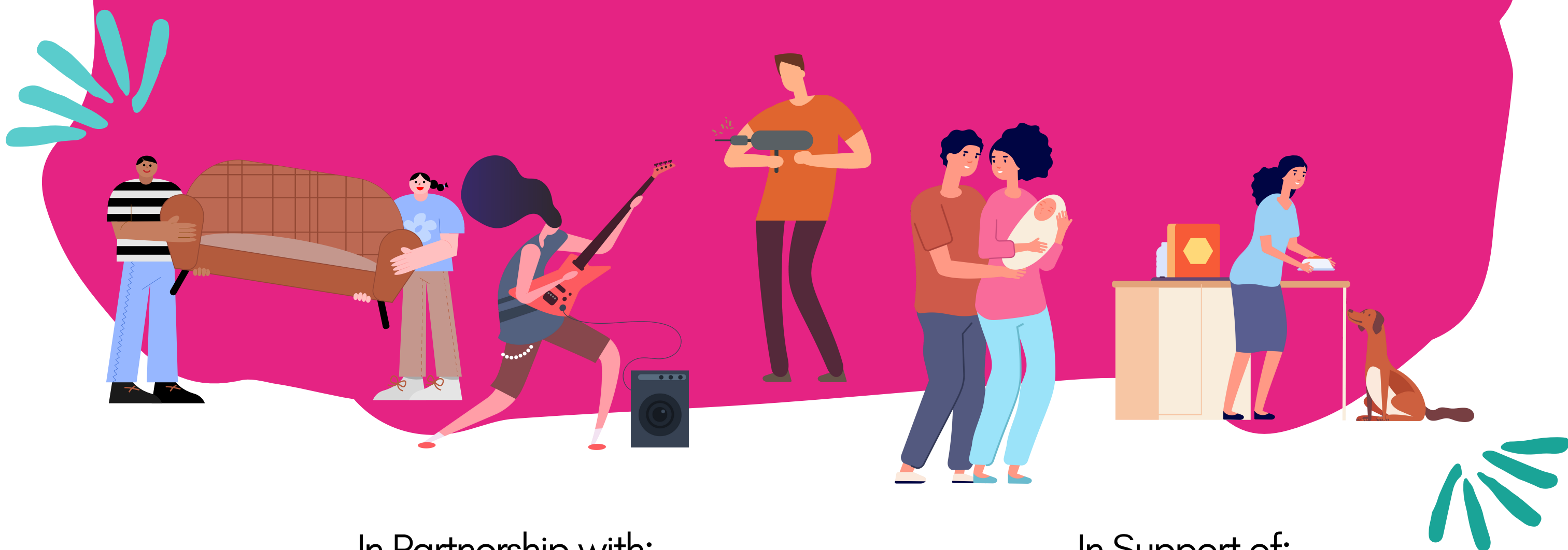


Community Advisory Panel (CAP) on Neighbourhood Noise



Outreach & Consultation on Neighbourhood Noise

A summary of the community's views and ideas



In Partnership with:



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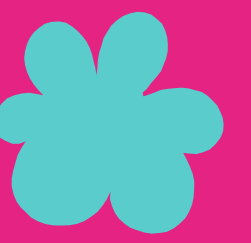
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Background



The Community Advisory Panel (CAP) on Neighbourhood Noise was set up in April 2022 as part of an integrated response to look into addressing noise from neighbours and congregation noise in common areas.

The pandemic has changed many things in our society, and one of them could well be our tolerance for noise. I hope the Panel can help us arrive at reasonable community expectations and obligations when it comes to maintaining peace and quiet in our neighbourhoods.

Ms Sim Ann,
Senior Minister of State for
National Development





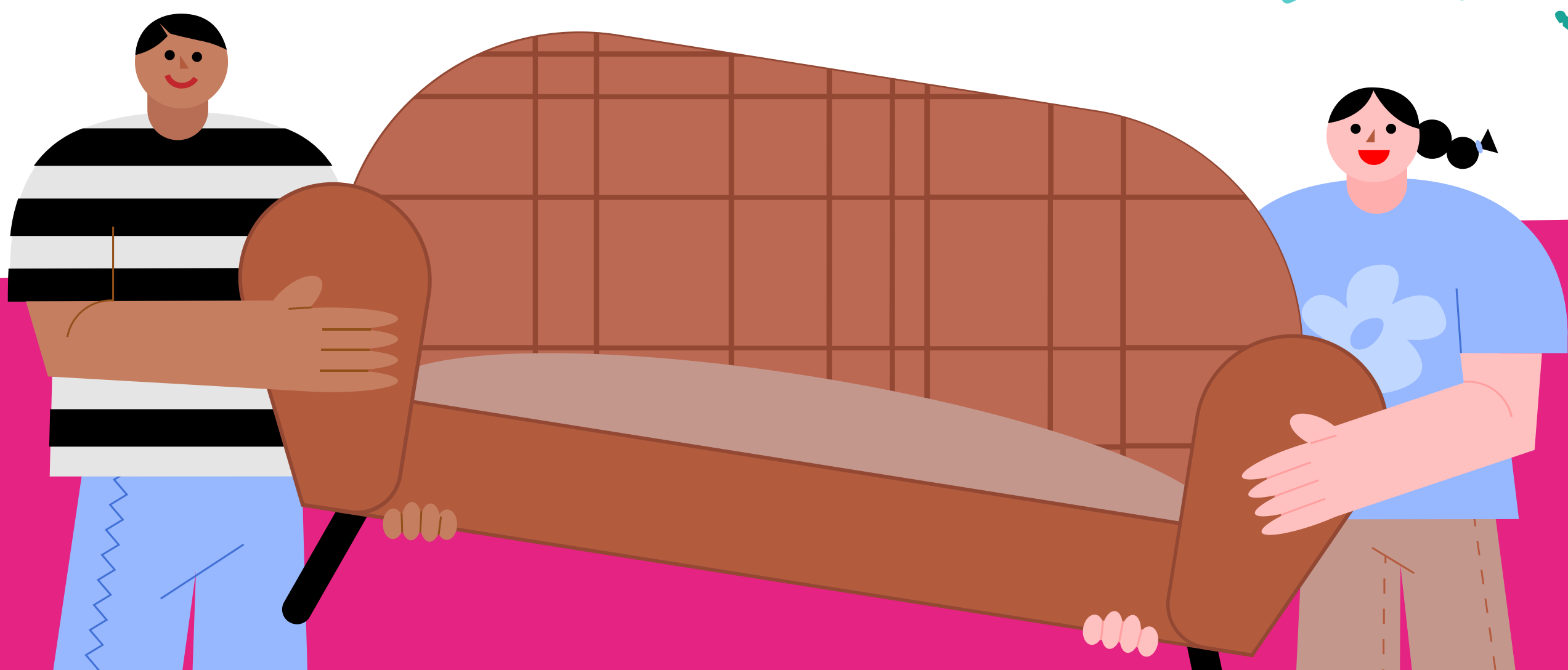
Comprising community stakeholders with relevant experience and expertise, the Panel looks at defining acceptable or unacceptable noise and positive community norms residents should adopt to reduce noise disturbances.



Disputes among neighbours over noise do strain our social cohesion. Yet, what constitutes unacceptable noise is subjective as different people have different levels of tolerance.

The Panel seeks to engage a wide segment of the community in a conversation about how we deal with noise disturbances in the community, and foster a stronger consensus on how we can accommodate and live harmoniously with one another, and be kinder and more considerate to one another.

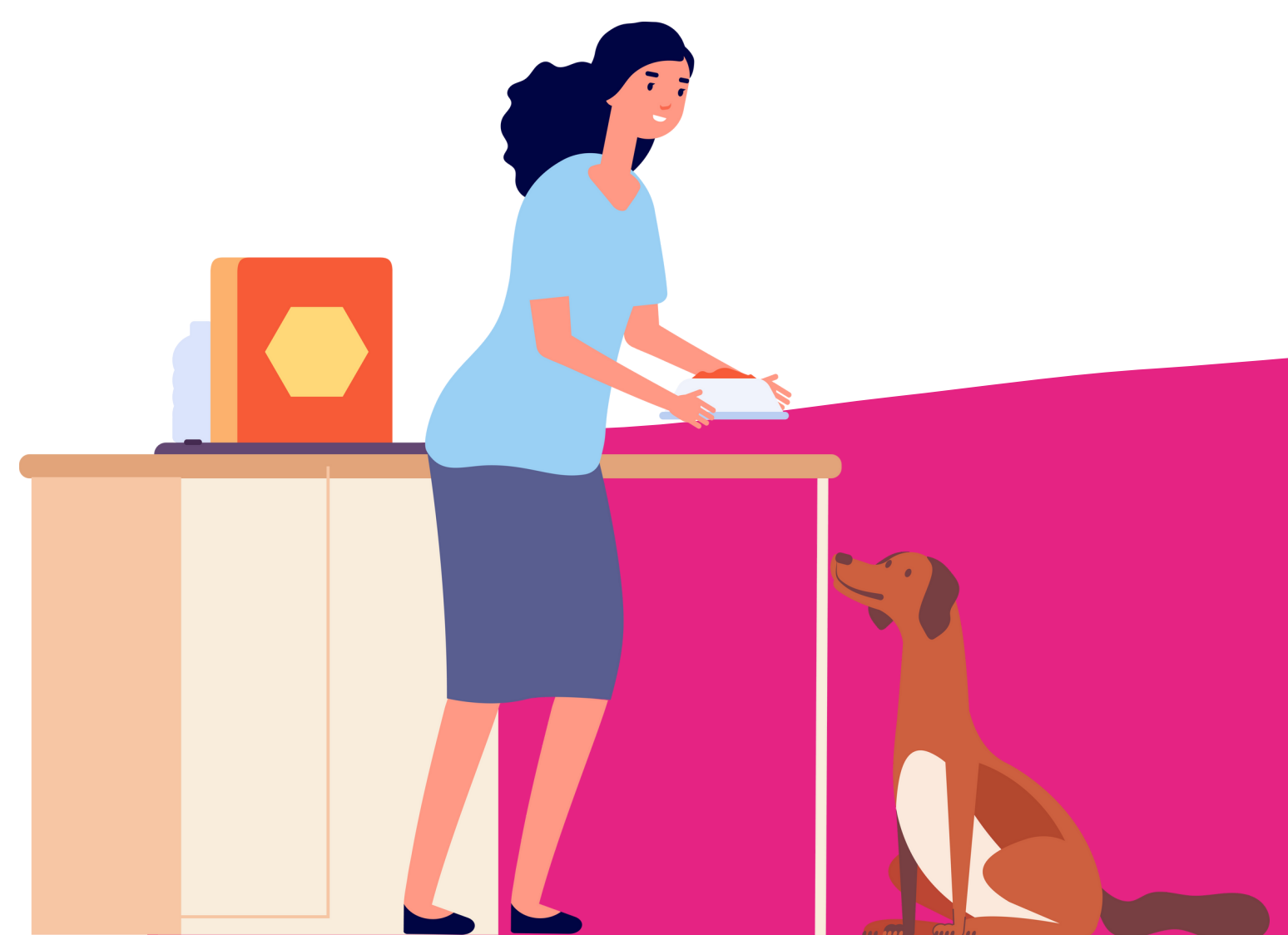
Dr William Wan
Chairperson of CAP





Why Social Norming?

- To facilitate dialogue and discussion among neighbours with different views over noise issues
- To serve as a useful benchmark for public advisories, and for facilitating mediation and decision-making at the Community Disputes Resolution Tribunal



From May to September 2022, close to 4,400 people participated in our engagements.



I welcome our government setting up the Community Advisory Panel to listen to members of the public who have been disturbed by noise in public or neighborhood areas. However I hope that it not only listens but also takes action to provide a better, healthier Singapore.

There was air time for everyone to share their experiences with neighbourhood noise and the large group sharing on solutions was helpful.

It was good to see diverse groups within various segments of society involved. This led to a better range of topics and issues discussed.

I look forward to solving the issue of noise with various agencies and this is an important first step.



Noise is a public health issue. According to the World Health Organisation, noise exposure can lead to direct health effects.

It can create stress and anxiety, and affect mental health and physical well-being.

Different people react differently to external stimulus. That is why some people are more tolerant than the others.

Prof Kua Ee Heok
Tan Geok Yin Professor in Psychiatry and Neuroscience
Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine, NUS
Emeritus Consultant
National University Hospital



Findings



The majority of FGD participants agreed that there are many considerations, such as the relationship with the person creating the noise, duration, frequency etc., that determine whether the noise is perceived as acceptable or unacceptable.



Public's Views on Acceptable Noise

A majority of FGD participants said that acceptable noise is noise that is unintentional or cannot be controlled.

Acceptable noise includes noise generated from activities that are necessary in our daily living and if neighbours have taken active steps to reduce the disturbance.

Whenever she does minor things at home (e.g. fixing the water pipe), the neighbour downstairs will come up to complain. The problem could not be resolved as the party creating the noise viewed that what they were doing was necessary and was not creating loud noises.



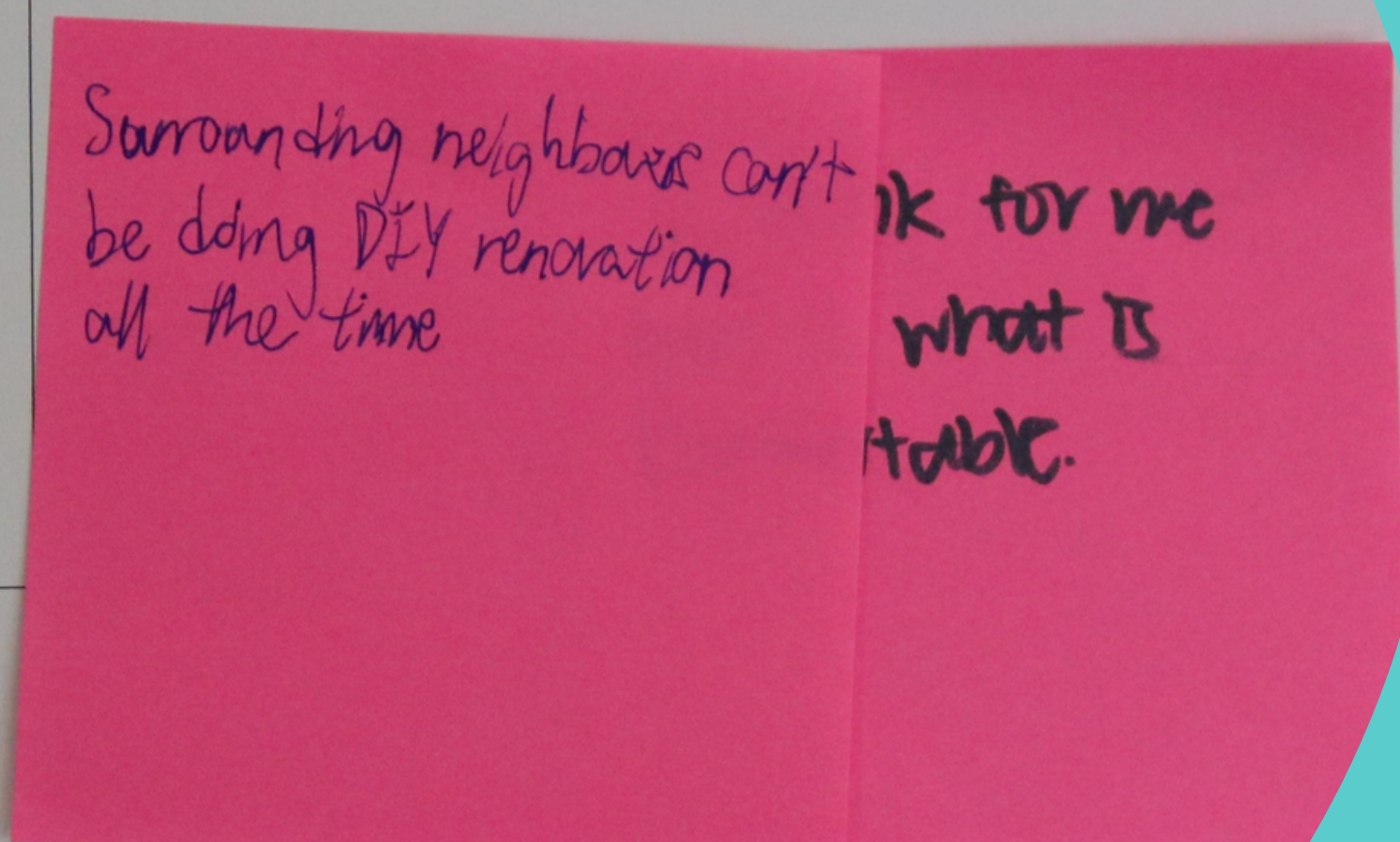
Public's Views on Acceptable Noise

The majority of people engaged felt that noise, which lasted less than 30 mins outside quiet hours, is acceptable.

If the noise occurs frequently, residents should speak to the neighbours to understand the reasons for the noise.

If it's noise that happens early in the day or if it has affected my life, I will do something about it. If not, I can tolerate it.





Surrounding neighbours can't
be doing DIY renovation
all the time

ik for me
what is
table.

Public's Views on Unacceptable Noise

A majority of FGD participants said that unacceptable noise is noise that is created intentionally to disturb neighbours.

They also felt that unacceptable noise includes situations where neighbours are inconsiderate and do not try to reduce the noise they generate.



Public's Views on Quiet Hours

A majority of respondents said that noisy activities during the quiet hours are unacceptable.

They also said that the current quiet hours between 10.30pm to 7am should be extended.

On weekends, some of us may wake up later to get more rest and sleep. How can we sleep if others are playing racquet sports early in the morning at 7am? This disrupts the quality of my rest.



Public's Views on Managing Unacceptable Noise

A majority of FGD participants called for strong enforcement action against unacceptable noise.

Some suggested the setting up of a specific authority to conduct investigation on noise.

We need to impose a penalty. My neighbour will not change if there's no penalty involved.

My neighbour refused to go for mediation. There's nothing I can do.

Norms alone will not work. Singapore is a 'fine' city.



Public's Views on Managing Unacceptable Noise

More than half of the survey respondents felt that it would be useful to establish a quantitative threshold for noise in decibels to provide an objective standard to regulate noise disputes.



Community Norms to Reduce Noise Disturbances

The majority of the FGD participants felt that it is **important to establish and build a strong relationship with their neighbours**. It helps in communication should there be noise concerns.

They also said that the first step of managing noise disputes should be communication with neighbours, instead of resorting to the authorities.

However, more than half of the survey respondents do not regularly communicate with neighbours.

The noise continued after my written note to him but after talking to him, he eventually moved his activities to weekdays 9am-5pm when we are not home.

The neighbour reduced her noise level after I talked to her.

My neighbour came to me and asked if I was the one who "bao toh" (reported) him to HDB about the noise. He was unhappy that I didn't talk to him first.



Public's Views on Managing Specific Noise Types

Movement-Related Noise

The majority of the survey respondents said that they would regularly:

- **Lift their furniture**, if possible, when moving it
- **Use door stoppers** to prevent accidental slamming of doors
- **Use furniture sliders or items to absorb the noise** if the furniture is too heavy to be lifted

It came to a point where I bought some sticker rubber absorbers for my neighbour upstairs who made a lot of noise dragging dining table chairs. He was apologetic but I was desperate to make sure that my father who was sick, got enough rest.



Public's Views on Managing Specific Noise Types

Activity-Related Noise

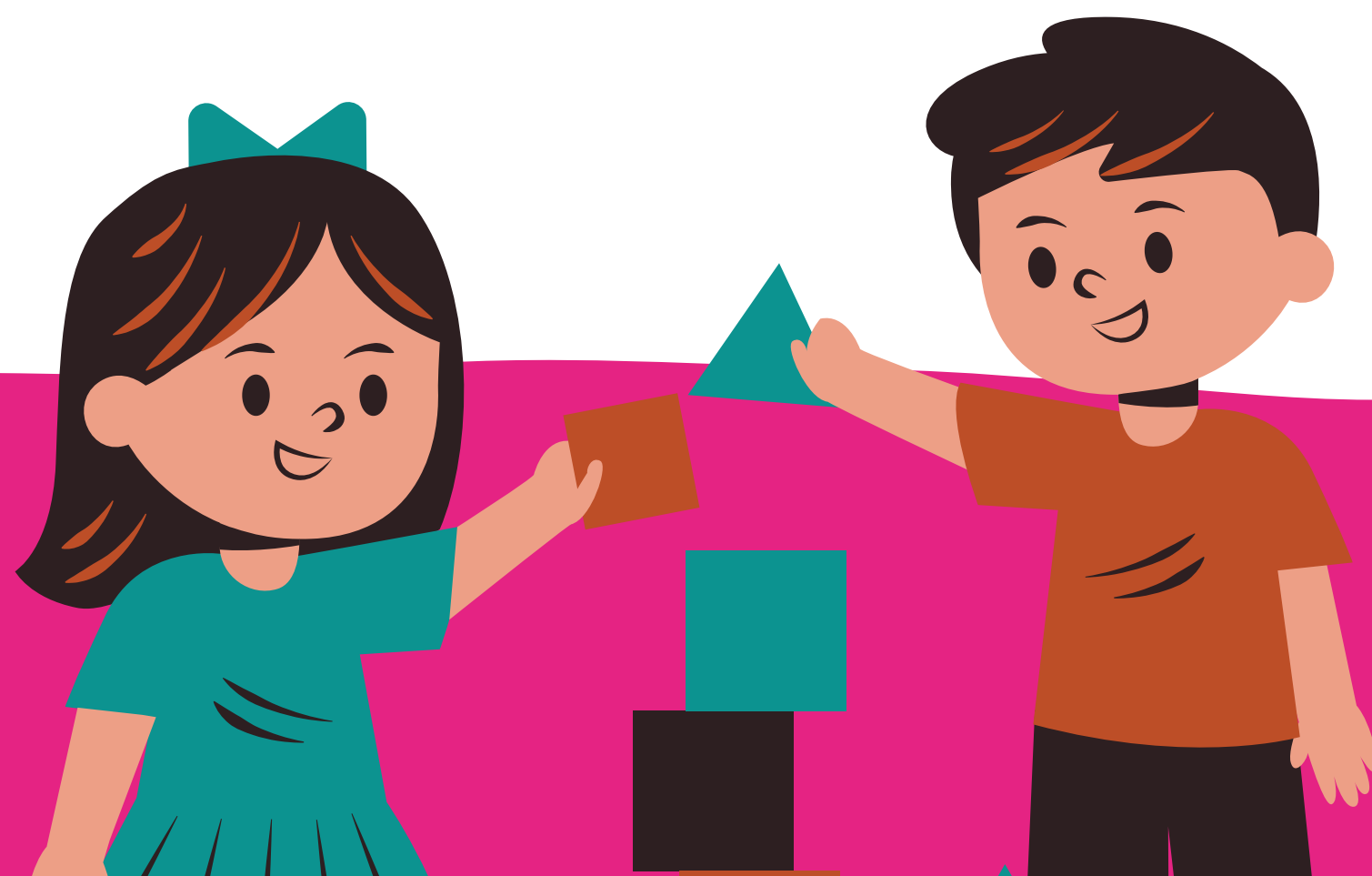
The majority of the survey respondents said that they would:

- Regularly **avoid using loud appliances at night**
- Regularly **lower their TV volume** and **avoid playing musical instruments**, especially **during quiet hours**

In addition, a majority of parents who responded to the online survey would regularly **ensure that their children do not create too much noise while playing**.

More than half of survey respondents would close the windows and doors if they are affected by the noise.

To be honest, I do not see anything wrong in children playing together and making noise. If they don't play, what can they do?



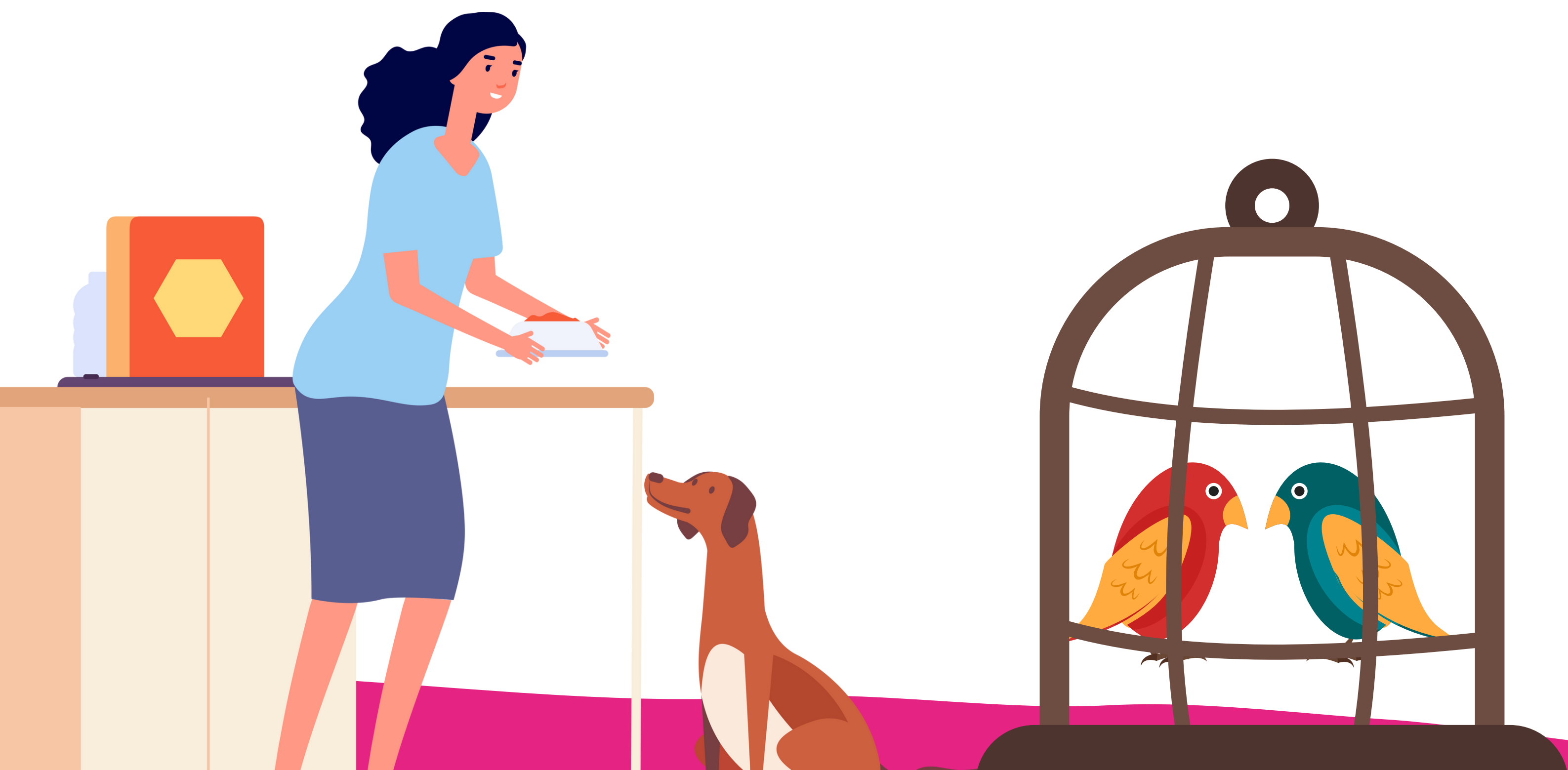
Public's Views on Managing Specific Noise Types

Pet-Related Noise

The majority of pet owners who responded to the online survey would regularly **move pets indoors to an enclosed room if necessary.**

For dog owners, a majority responded to the online survey that they would regularly **train their pet dog to avoid excessive barking.**

More than half of bird owners who responded to the online survey would regularly drape or cover the birdcages in the evenings to allow the birds to rest and avoid excessive chirping.



Public's Views on Managing Specific Noise Types

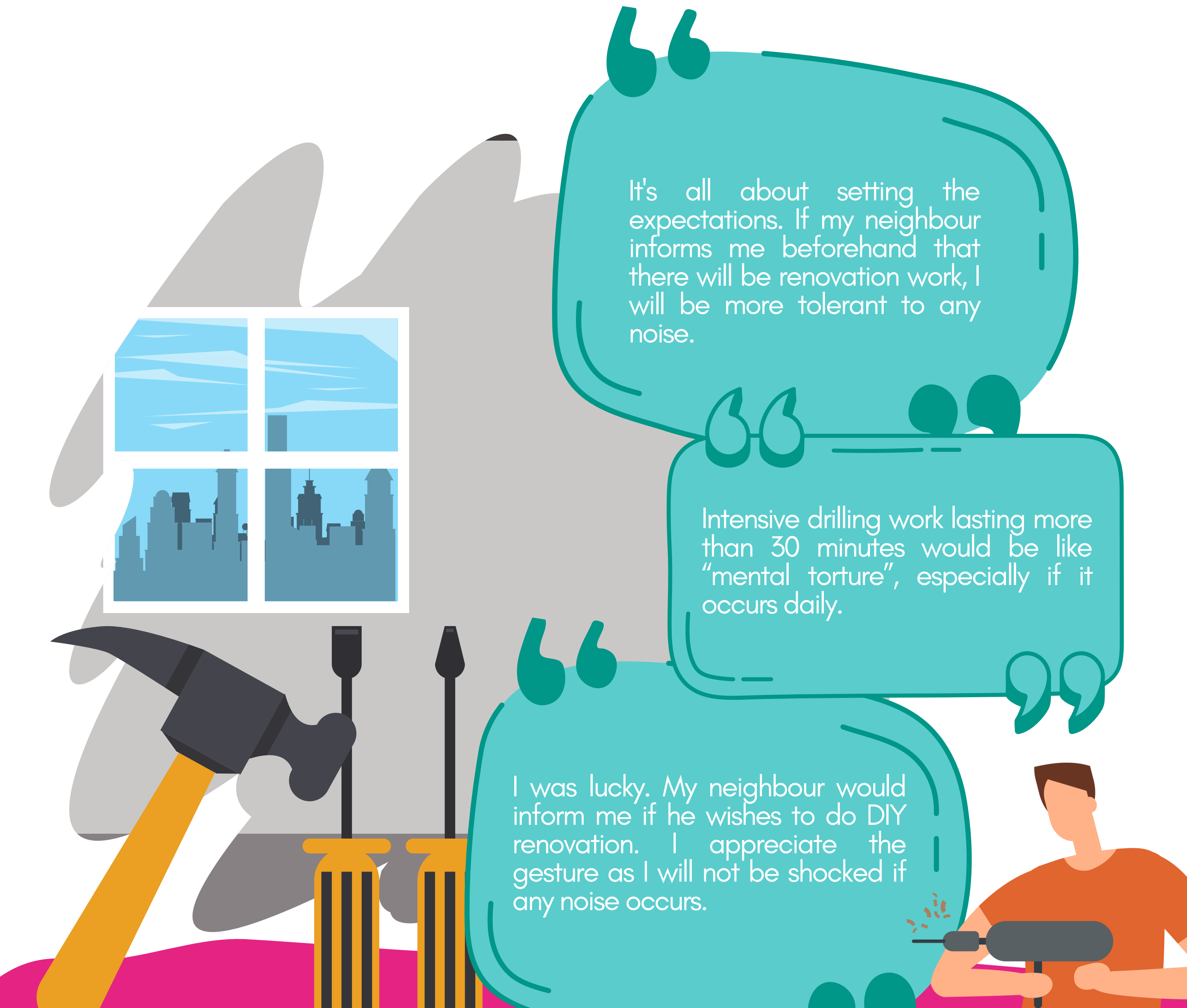
DIY Renovation Noise

The majority of survey respondents would regularly **keep their drilling and hammering to a short period of time.**

It's all about setting the expectations. If my neighbour informs me beforehand that there will be renovation work, I will be more tolerant to any noise.

Intensive drilling work lasting more than 30 minutes would be like "mental torture", especially if it occurs daily.

I was lucky. My neighbour would inform me if he wishes to do DIY renovation. I appreciate the gesture as I will not be shocked if any noise occurs.



Conclusion

Summary of Observations

Neighbourhood Noise

Resident to assess the type of noise

Acceptable Noise

Unacceptable Noise

1

Unintentional/uncontrollable noise e.g. baby crying

2

Neighbours have taken measures to keep noise down.

3

Noise which lasted less than 30 mins

1

Intentional noise

2

Inconsiderate noise where neighbours do not try to reduce noise they generate

3

Noisy activities during quiet hours

Take measures to reduce noise, and communicate with neighbours to address concerns

Strong enforcement action should be taken against recalcitrant offenders.





The CAP would like to thank the public for sharing their thoughts and suggestions on addressing noise issues during our public consultation and engagements.

The key findings gathered through our public engagements will inform our final recommendations. The Panel will submit our recommendations to the Government end 2022.

Visit go.gov.sg/communityadvisorypanel to stay updated on our work.

