



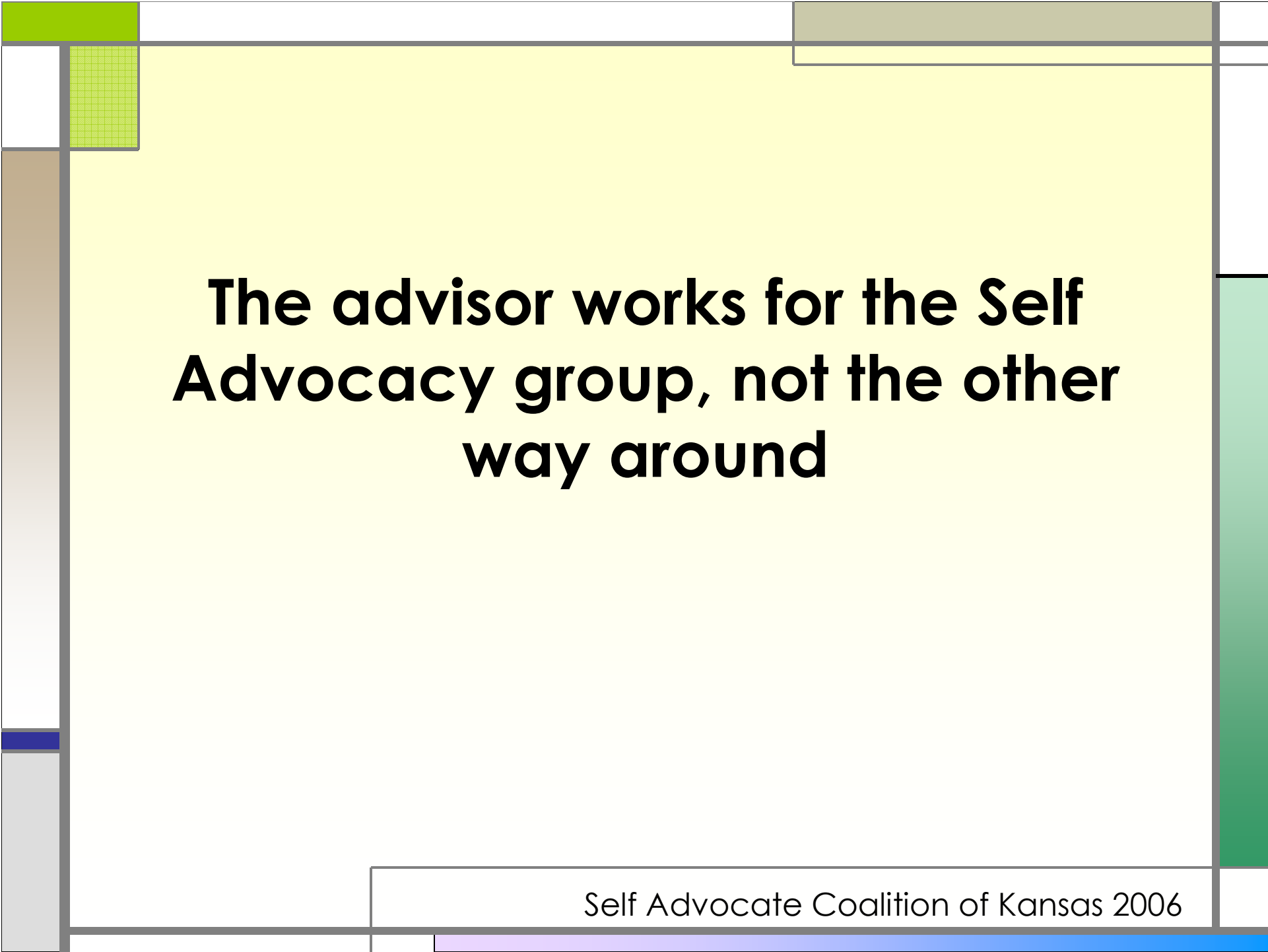
The Role of the Advisor

Facilitating Self Advocacy

Self Advocate Coalition of Kansas 2006

The number one rule:

Facilitate,
don't dictate!



**The advisor works for the Self
Advocacy group, not the other
way around**

1) Tips for Supporting Self Advocacy

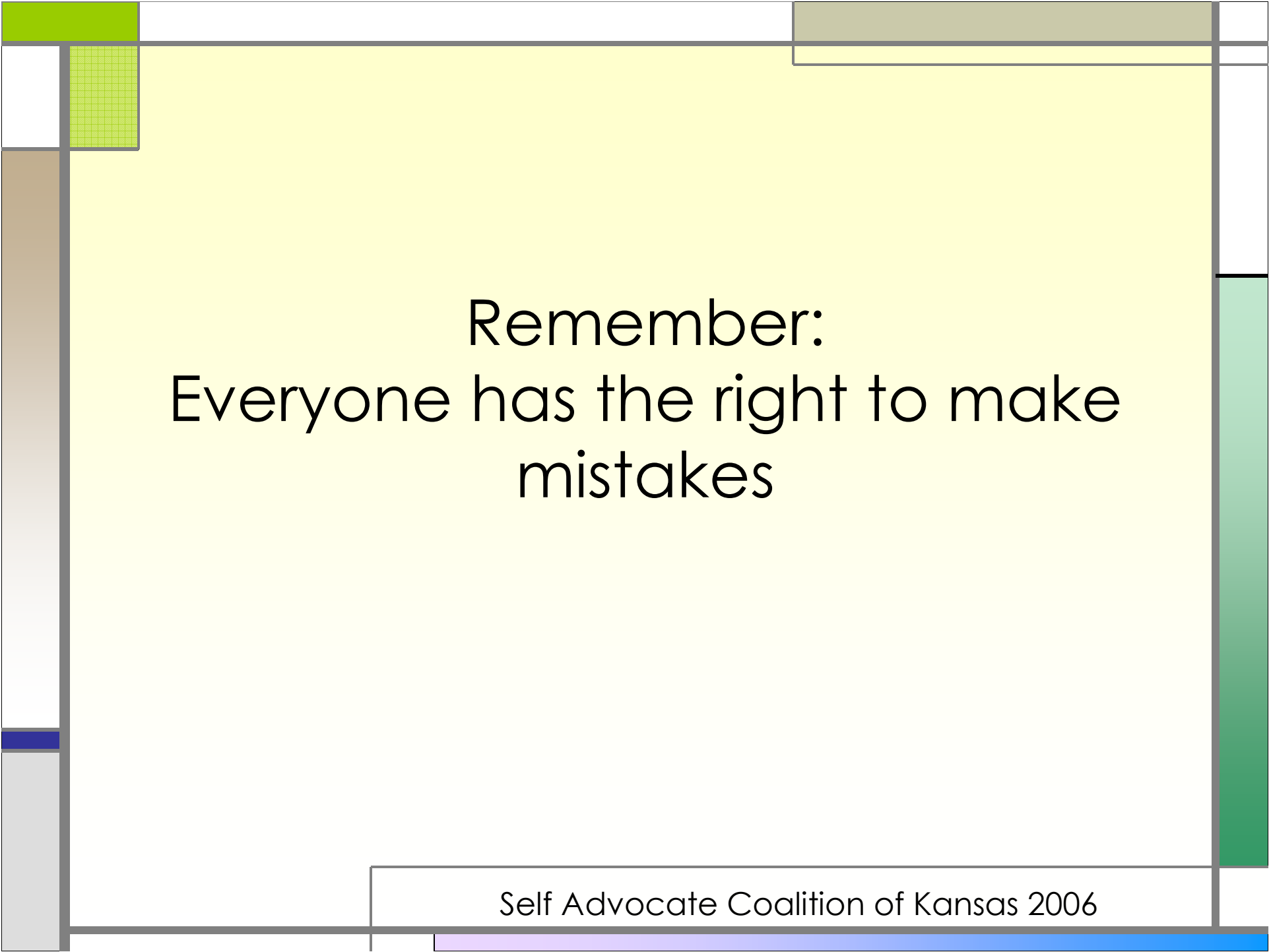


Respect the person's choices

If the self advocates have all the information and they make a decision, your job is to support their choice

Empower the person

Allow individuals to try things for themselves first. They will ask for your help if and when they need it.



Remember:
Everyone has the right to make
mistakes



Speak in people first language

**Your language communicates more
about your attitudes and opinions than
you think!**

Perceptions can be different

Understanding differences in perception is a key to communication. Your perception may be completely different than someone else in the same situation.

Everybody has a disability

**Everybody has a disability—
Some are just more visible than
others.**

Check for understanding

When making plans, it is important to check for understanding. Some people are reluctant to admit that they don't understand something being discussed.

Teach Self Advocacy Skills

Help people understand their rights and responsibilities. Help people advocate for themselves assertively.

2) Characteristics of effective self advocacy advisors

The advisor is a positive role model

- Arrives at meetings and activities on time
- Is well groomed
- Is a good listener
- Respects the opinions and values of others
- Acts as a team member

Helps provide information on community resources

- Housing, job and leisure opportunities
- Educational opportunities (workshops, conferences, continuing education)
- Policy making opportunities (board and committee planning)

Provides information on how to run a meeting

- Leadership training
- Voting procedures
- Communication techniques

Asks “key” questions to check for understanding

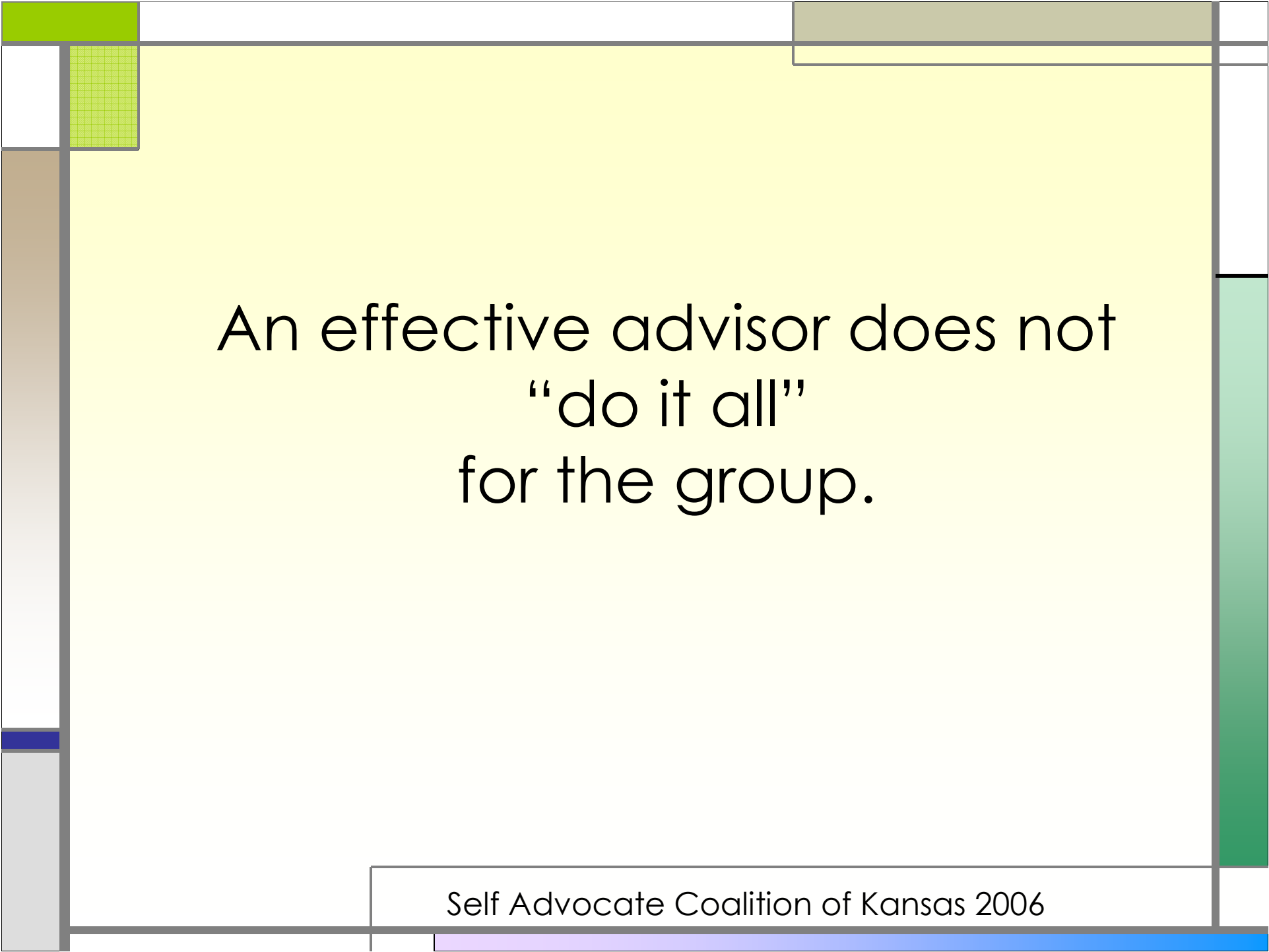
- Uses short words and sentences. Ensures information is easy to understand.
- Asks open ended questions. (Don't ask questions that can be answered with “Yes” or “No.”)

Retains objectivity

- Lets the group make the decisions
- Gives advice only when asked or when additional information is needed to make an informed decision

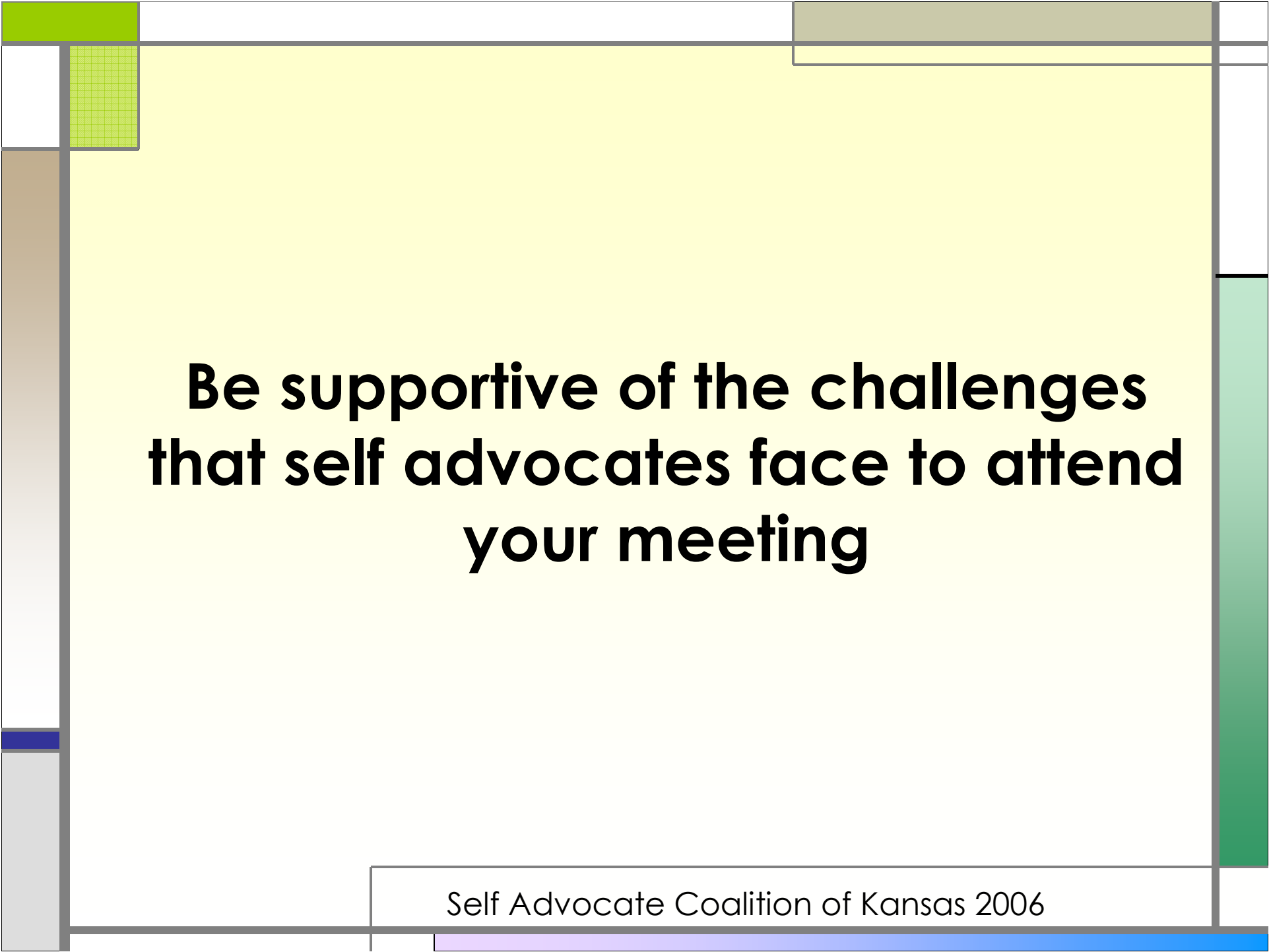
Assists the group in attaining “their” goals

- Helps the group understand the concept of delegating responsibilities
- Assists when asked by members or when members need assistance to make an informed choice.



An effective advisor does not
“do it all”
for the group.

3) Supporting Self Advocates as Council members



**Be supportive of the challenges
that self advocates face to attend
your meeting**

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Areas of difficulty may include:

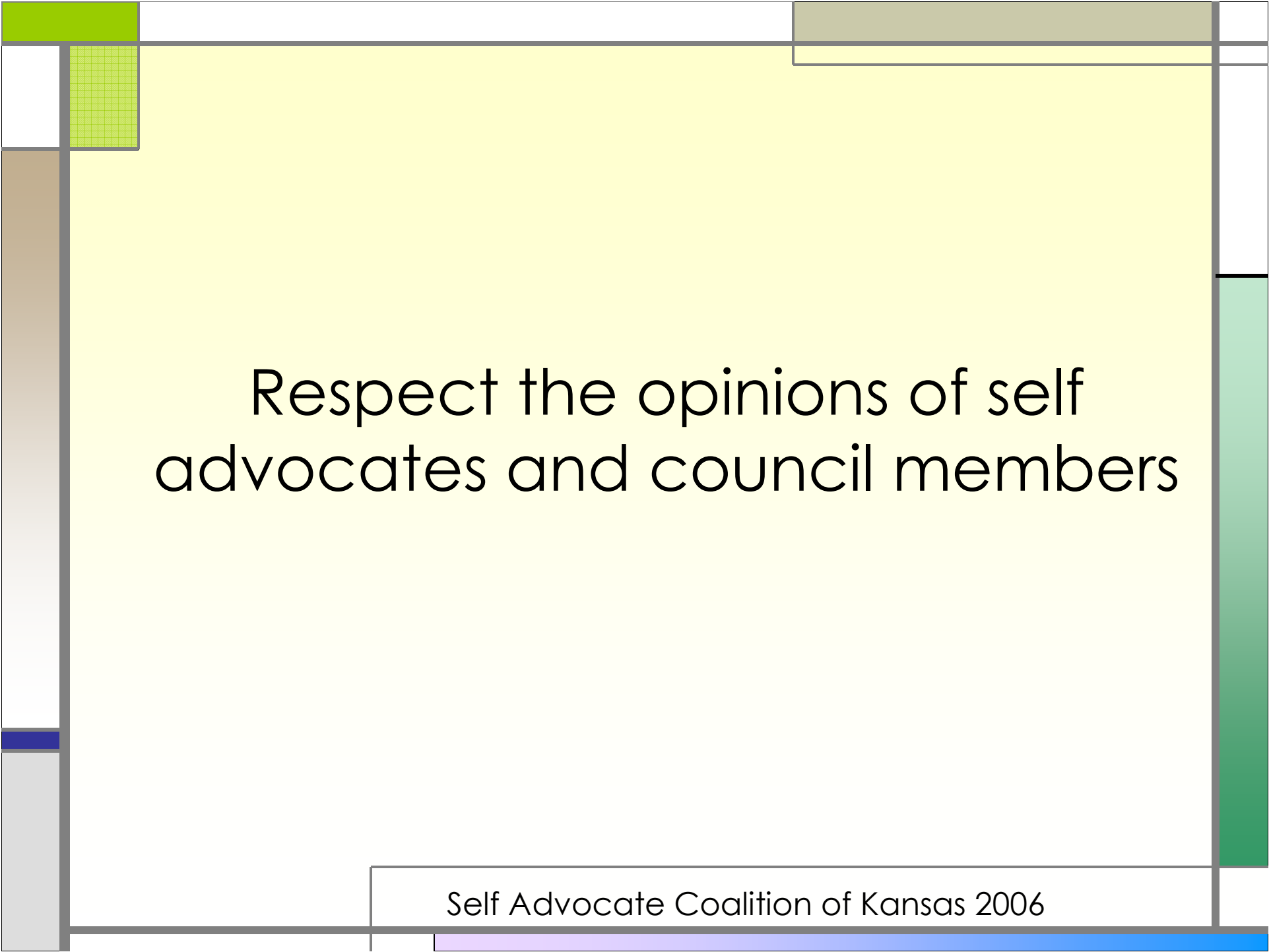
- **Transportation**
- **Remembering meeting times**
- **Note taking**
- **Organizing meeting materials**
- **Setting meeting times**

Empower self advocates to discuss and make important decisions

If a self advocate is in charge of something or has a duty, allow them to perform that duty for their decisions and actions to carry real weight.



Assign a council member to new self advocate council members



Respect the opinions of self
advocates and council members

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Go over council packets and
meeting materials prior to the
meeting

Have the highest expectations

Self advocates are full voting members of your council and should be expected to fulfill their commitment to the council.

4) Sample contract between self advocate group and advisor