



# What is Self Advocacy?

Presentation adapted by the **Self Advocate Coalition of Kansas** from the *My Voice, My Choice: A Manual for Self-Advocates* curriculum developed by the Human Services Research Institute and distributed by Program Development Associates, Cicero, NY.

# You will learn about:

- Being an **ADVOCATE FOR CHANGE**  
(Changing the service system)
- Deciding **WHAT** to change
- Making an **ACTION PLAN** for change



# Things I like and things I'd CHANGE

➤ What three things do you like most about your life - three things you would not want to change?

➤ What three things would you like to change about your life—at home, at work, or in the community?



# **YOUR** voice can be **POWERFUL**



People with  
developmental disabilities

**SPEAKING OUT**

can be

**POWERFUL**

Advocates for Change

Adapted by the **Self Advocate Coalition of Kansas**

# You can be an **“ADVOCATE FOR CHANGE”**



## ADVOCATE FOR CHANGE:

Someone who speaks up and takes action to make things different.

**Someone who changes things!**

Adapted by the **Self Advocate Coalition of Kansas**

# What is a “SELF ADVOCATE”?

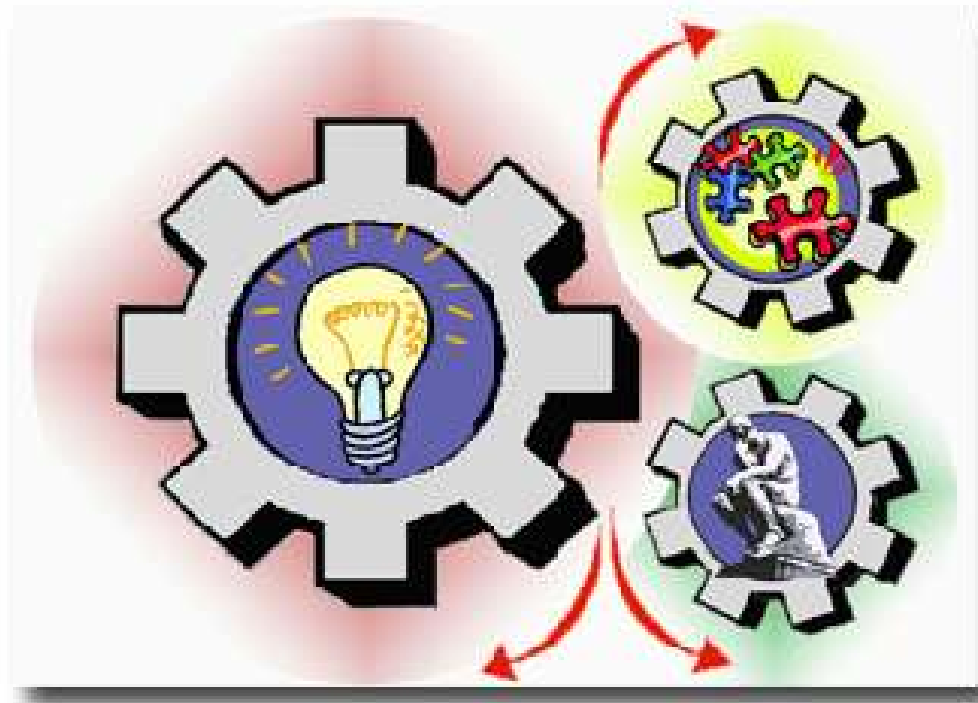
A Self Advocate is...



❖ A person who speaks up for himself or herself and lets others know what he or she thinks.

# Being a Self Advocate means...

Solving problems and making decisions



Adapted by the **Self Advocate Coalition of Kansas**

**Being a SELF ADVOCATE means...**

**SPEAKING for  
OURSELVES**



Adapted by the **Self Advocate Coalition of Kansas**

# Being a **SELF ADVOCATE** means...

Knowing RIGHTS  
and  
RESPONSIBILITIES



Adapted by the **Self Advocate Coalition of Kansas**

# Being a **SELF ADVOCATE** means...

Contributing to  
your  
**COMMUNITY**



Adapted by the **Self Advocate Coalition of Kansas**

# Two Levels of Advocacy...

## Individual:



- Changes that you (or a friend) need in your own services and supports.

## System:



- Changes in policies or rules that everybody in the service system needs.

# Individual Level Problems

For example...

- You need help with your banking
- Your friend doesn't like her job
- You are having trouble getting around town
- Your friend doesn't like where he lives



# System Level Problems

You might want to change the rules about...

- ✓ **How money is used for developmental disability services**
- ✓ **What kinds of family support services a family can get**
- ✓ **Who lives in an institution and who lives in the community with residential services**

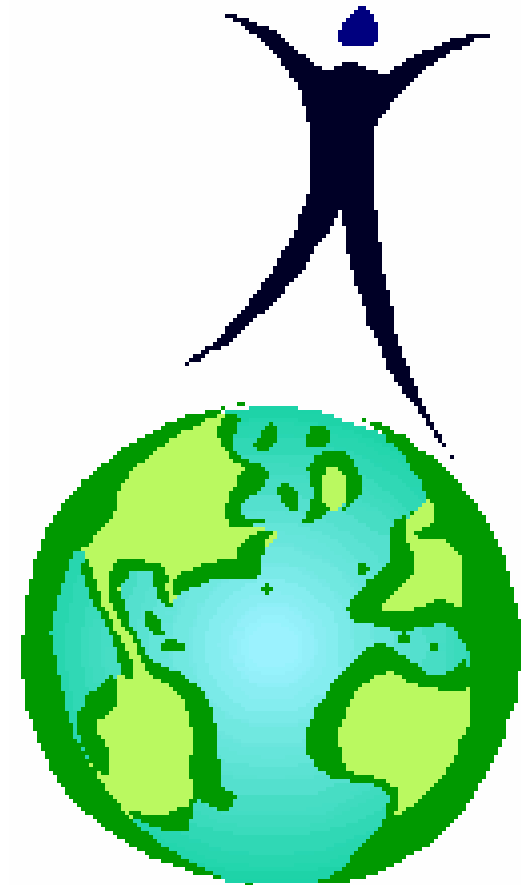


Adapted by the **Self Advocate Coalition of Kansas**

# 4 steps to change

Making a Plan and Taking Action

- 1) What is the problem?
- 2) Who can fix it?
- 3) What should I do?
- 4) Did I get the change I wanted?



Adapted by the Self Advocate Coalition of Kansas

# 1. What is the Problem?

DEFINE the  
problem.

The stoplight doesn't  
last long enough.



What would  
be BETTER?

The crosswalk would  
be long enough so  
that people with  
disabilities could  
safely cross the  
street.



**Define some  
problems in your  
life?**

**What would be  
better?**



## 2. Decide who can fix it

Who can  
make the  
changes you  
want?

- Yourself
- Family or friend
- Support staff
- Government



### 3. Decide what ACTIONS to take

- ASK for what you want and get **SUPPORT** for your idea
- Make the message **LOUDER**
- Ask **AGAIN**



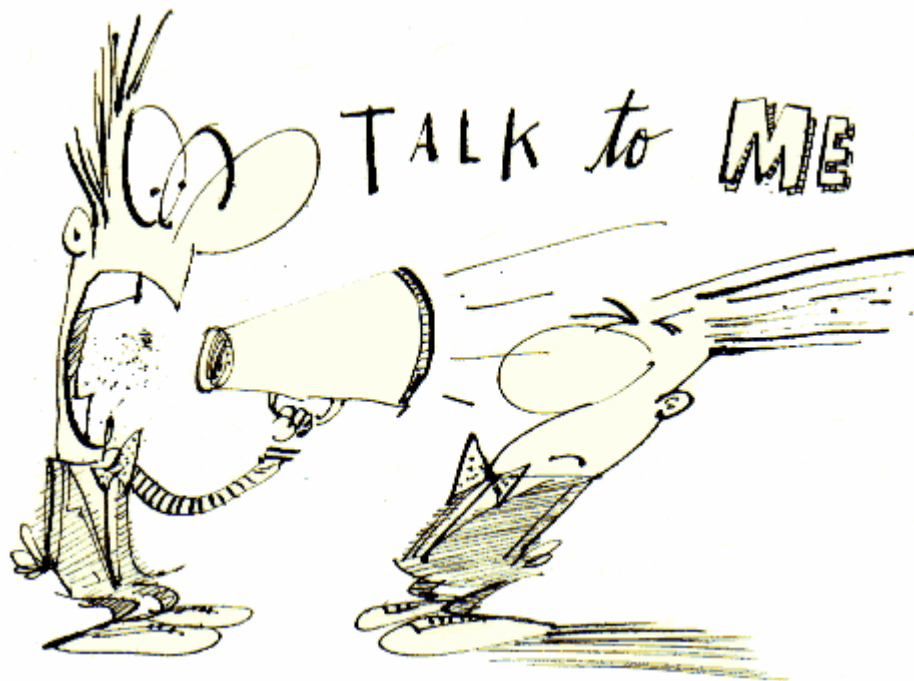
# Ask for what you want

- Meet personally with the decision maker
- Write letters
- Make phone calls
- Go to meetings
- Draft legislation



**Get SUPPORT for your idea**  
**GET THE WORD OUT!**

# Make the message LOUDER!



If you asked  
again, and  
there is no  
action or  
answer...

- plan a march
- public rally
- letter writing campaign

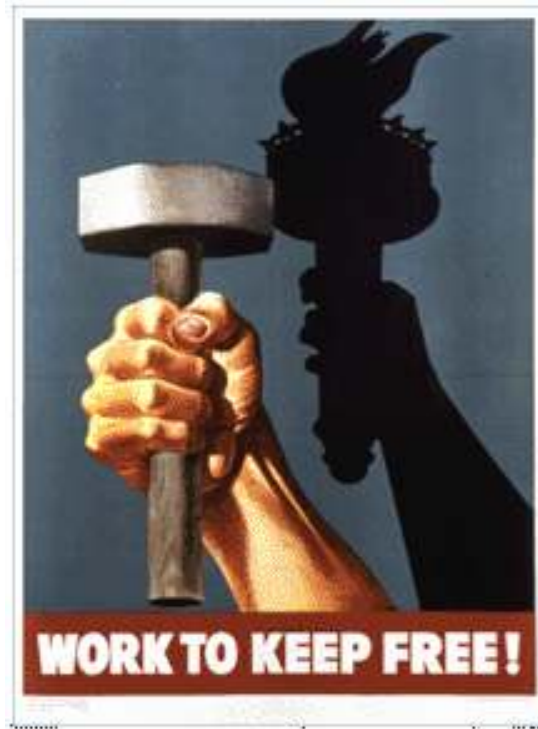
# ASK AGAIN

**Big problems need big solutions and take longer to fix.**

**Don't give up.**



## **4. Did you get the change you wanted?**



**If no, make changes to  
your plan and get  
back to work.**

Adapted by the **Self Advocate Coalition of Kansas**

**If you did get the changes you  
wanted...**



**CELEBRATE!**

Adapted by the **Self Advocate Coalition of Kansas**