



# 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**

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!**

# What is a “SELF ADVOCATE”?

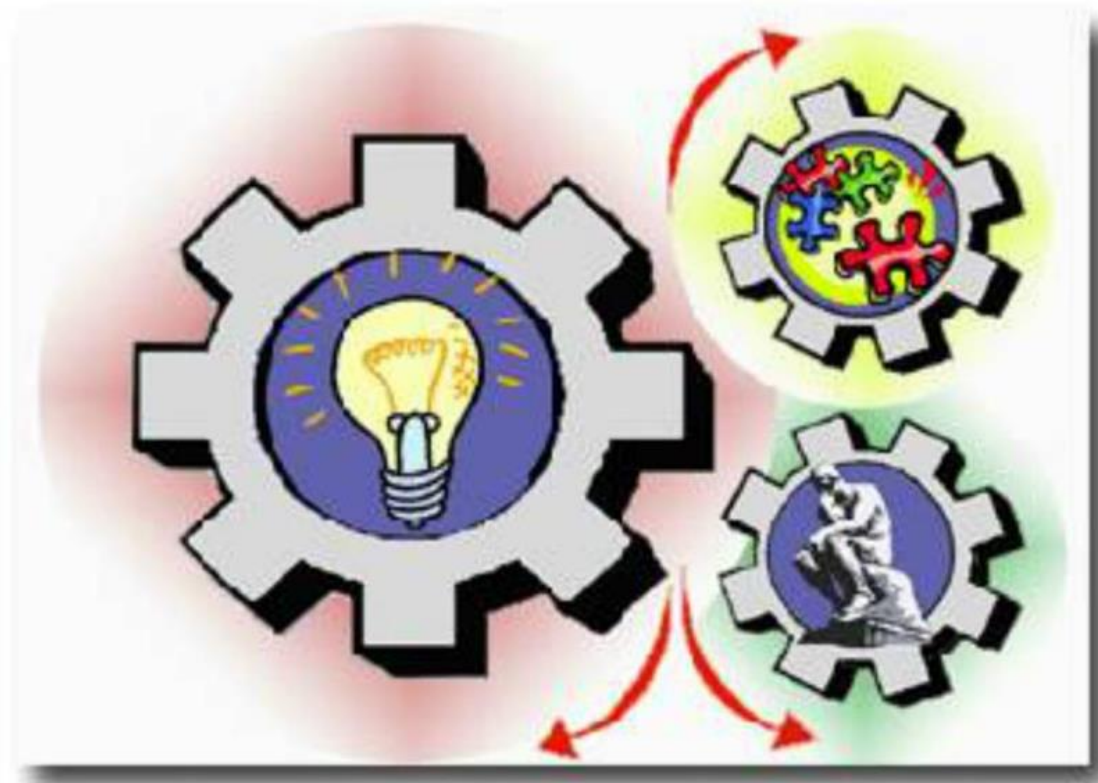
A Self Advocate is...



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

# Being a Self Advocate means...

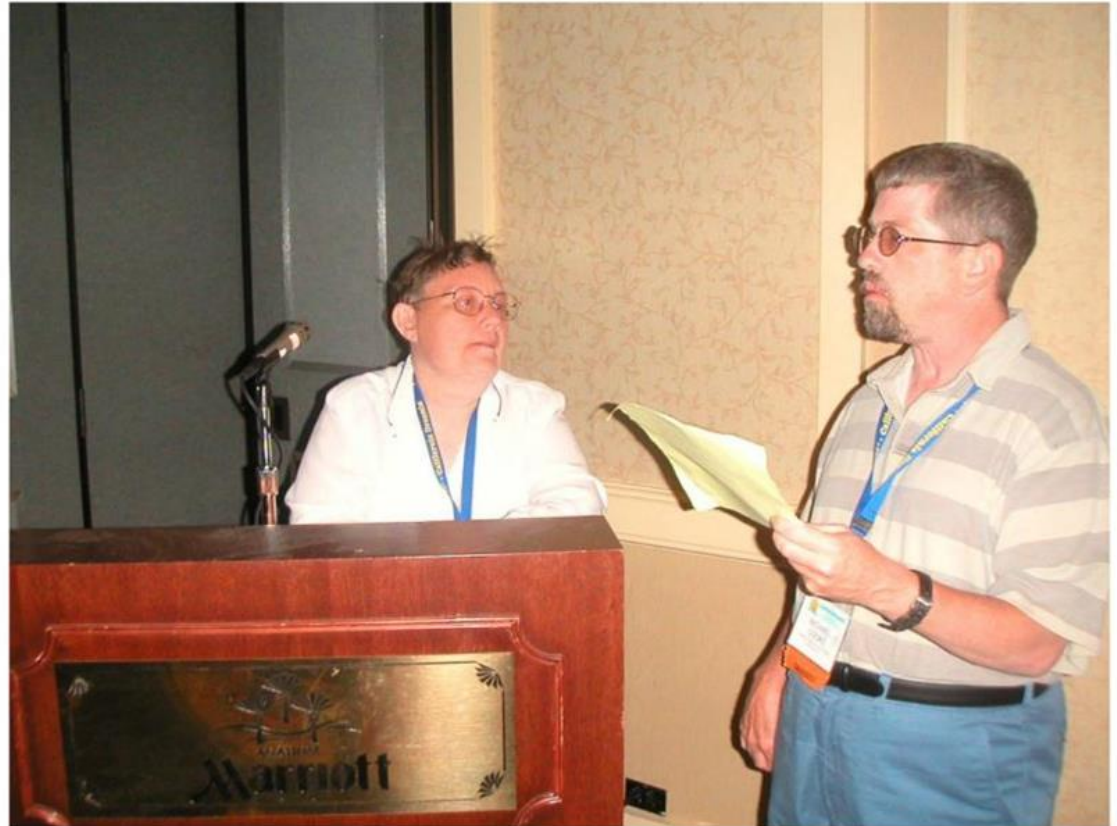
**Solving problems and making decisions**



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Being a SELF ADVOCATE means...

**SPEAKING for  
OURSELVES**



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

Knowing RIGHTS and  
RESPONSIBILITIES



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

**Contributing to  
your COMMUNITY**



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# Two Levels of Advocacy...

## Individual:



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

## System:

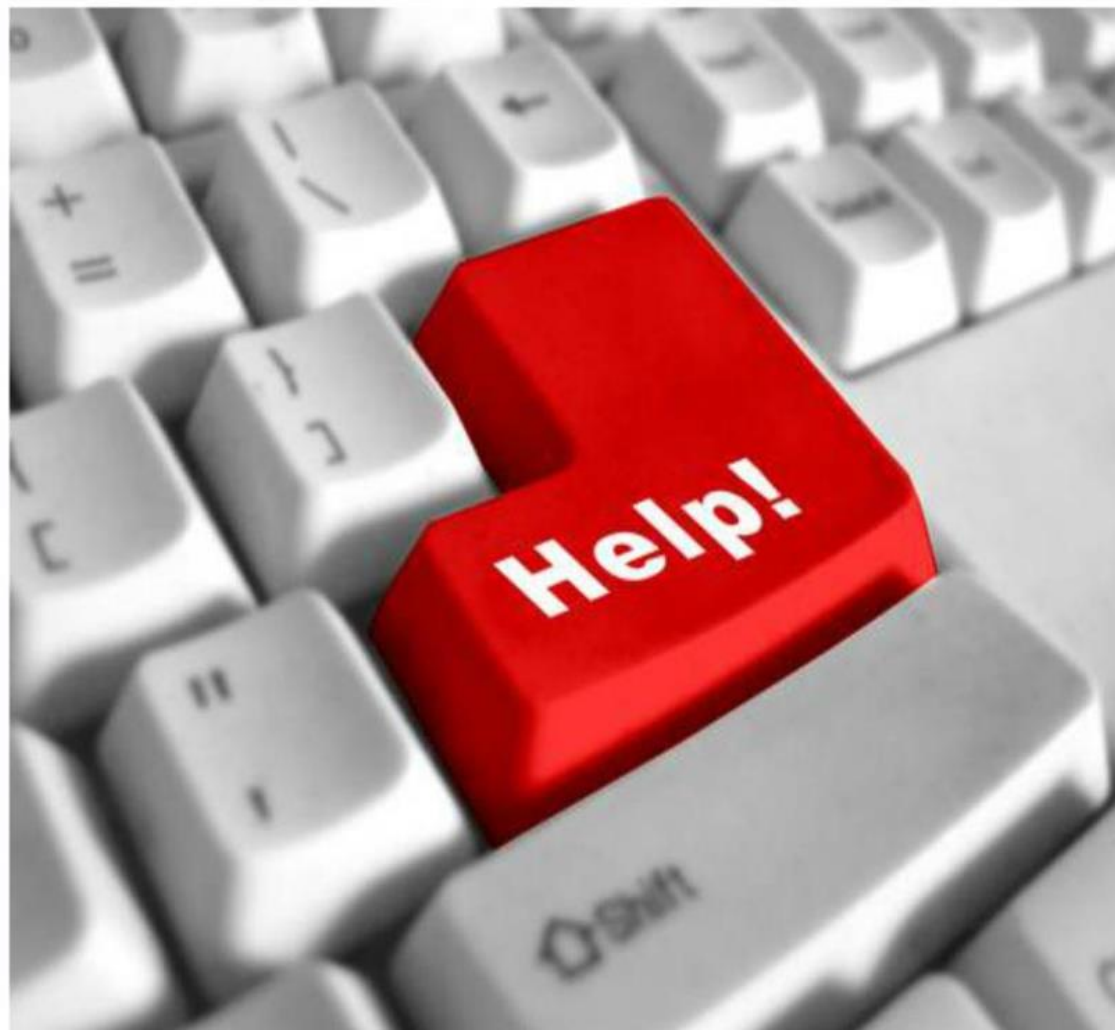


- Changes in policies or rules that everybody in the service system needs.

# 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



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# 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?**



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- 4) **Did I get the**

# 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?**

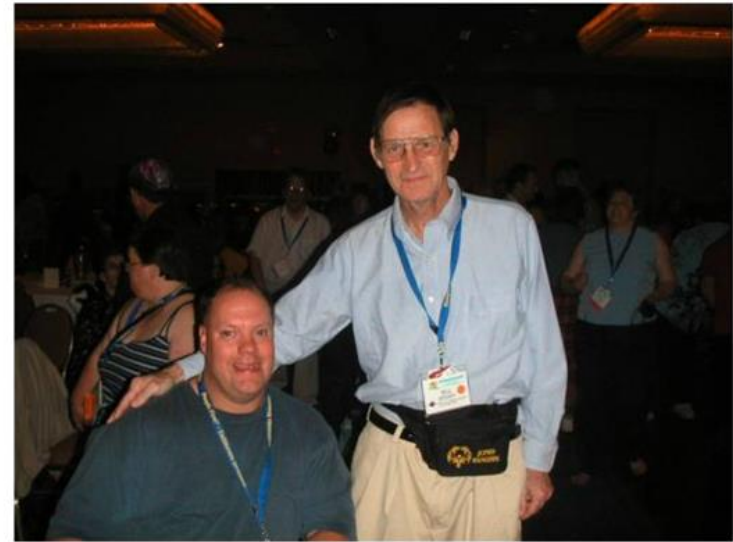


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## 2. Decide who can fix it

# 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**



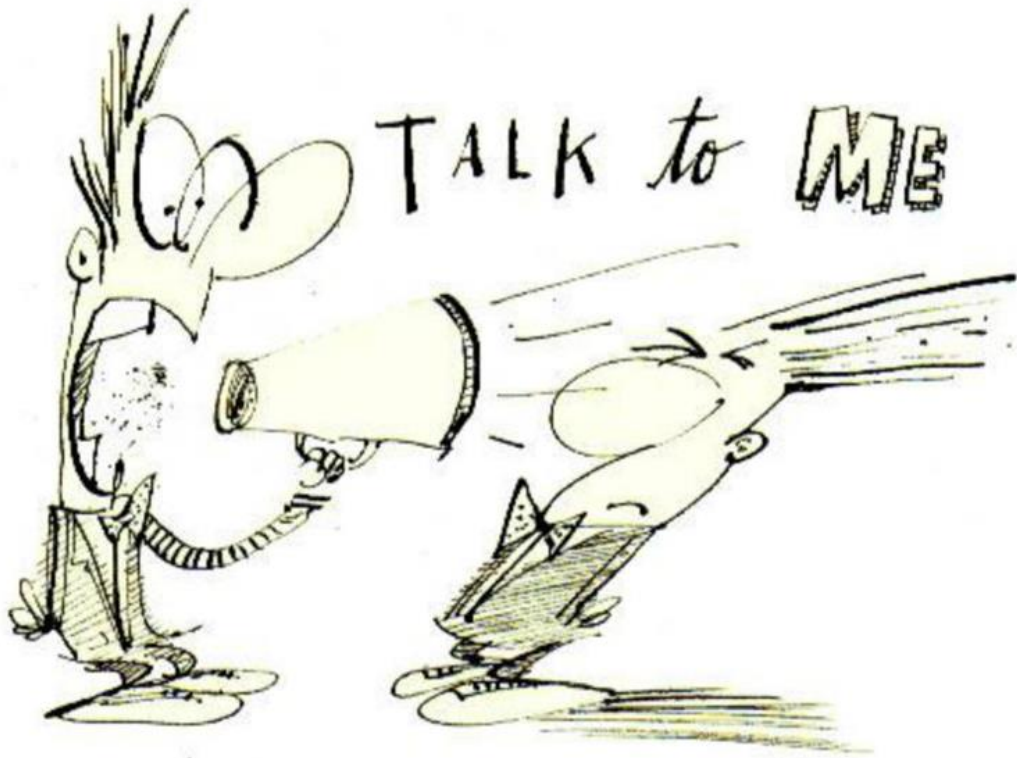
# Ask for what you want

- **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

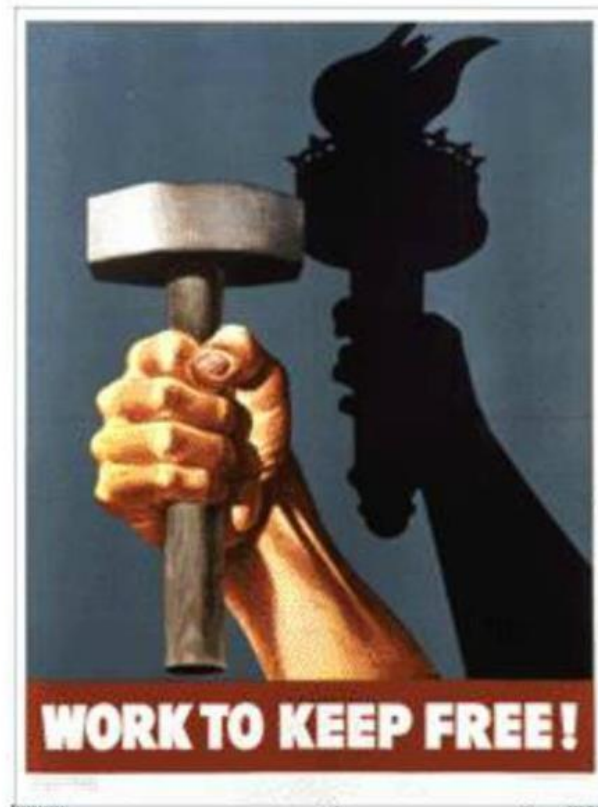
# ASK AGAIN

**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.**

If you did get the changes you wanted...



**CELEBRATE!**

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