Definition:

- The excessive use or misuse of alcohol and a variety of drugs to produce a non-therapeutic effect on the mind and body.
Why do people use:

- Pain
- Depression
- To self medicate
- Loneliness
- Financial worries
- Cope with grief or loss
- Changes in family life
- Genetically predisposed
Effects of Drinking Alcohol:

- More likely to fall, may be unable to do transfers – risk injuring yourself
- Skin breakdown – through dehydration or forgetting to shift positions
- Bladder – may forget to catheterize, may lead to more bladder infection/UTI (alcohol weakens the immune system)
- Consider medications you are taking and how alcohol may interact
Pain Medication:

- Narcotics can be very addictive
- Easy to misuse
- Alcohol may intensify effects
- Readily available

Ways to manage pain medication:
- Pain journal
- Enlist a family member
- Stretching/Exercise
- Heat/Ice
Illegal Drugs:

- It is not known what the effects of illegal drugs will be on SCI survivors.
  - Your systems are already compromised
  - Your body is relearning how to function
  - You may be taking multiple medications
Statistics:

- 39% - 50% of patients participating in physical rehab programs have preexisting problems with substance abuse
- 10% of the general population have a substance abuse problem
- 50% of the SCI population have a problem with substance abuse
- Approximately 4.7 million American adults with disabilities have a co-occurring substance abuse problem
How can I get help?

- Treatment for substance abuse is available.
- Medical professionals can help refer you to the appropriate treatment for substance abuse.
- Treatment varies from attending an AA/NA meeting to inpatient substance abuse treatment.
How can I get help?

- Alcoholics Anonymous - [www.aa-louisiana.org](http://www.aa-louisiana.org) or 1-800-285-3989
- Narcotics Anonymous [www.na.org](http://www.na.org) or 504-899-6262
- Office of Addictive Disorders 1-225-342-6717
- Alcohol/Drug Helpline 1-877-664-2248