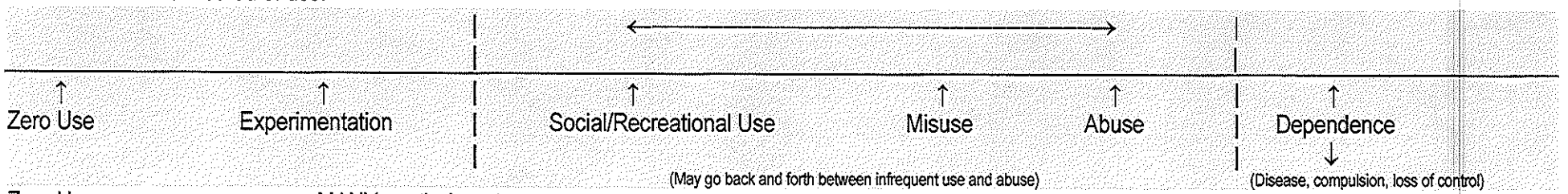
SUBSTANCE USE AMONG YOUNG PEOPLE

Continuum of Use: Most individuals do not go from zero use to addiction overnight. It is a process that involves several factors including the addictive qualities of the substance and method of use.



Zero Use: MANY youth do not use.

Experimentation: Some youth experiment with drugs and alcohol, which is common among adolescent. They try it *but don't continue*.

Social/Recreational Use: Youth who use at a party, on occasion, not in excess, *no pattern* or misuse, responsible (not drinking /driving, not "wasted").

Misuse: Beginning to use to manage negative thoughts and/or feelings, using to replace boredom, stress, fears, trying to fit in...

Abuse: **A pattern emerges** that leads to impairment or distress as seen in the past 12 months by at **least 1 of the following:**

- *Recurrent* failure to meet important obligations such as school or work, starts getting suspended or doesn't do homework;
- *Recurrent* use in situations that are hazardous such as chugging games, passing out, driving under influence;
- *Recurrent* legal problems –tickets, arrests, fights when drinking/ using, drinking and driving, put on probation...
- Continues to use in spite of social or personal problems related to use (e.g. frequent fights with family, friends, teachers)

Dependence: Leads to impairment or distress as seen within the past 12 months, unless in recovery, by at **least 3 of the following**:

- Tolerance (need more of the substance to get the same effect);
- Withdrawal (symptoms when one doesn't have the substance);
- Substance is taken over longer periods of time or in larger amounts than intended;
- Individual has had unsuccessful attempts to quit or cut down;
- He/she spends a great deal of time getting the substance, using the substance, and recovering from it
- Important social, occupation, or recreational activities are given up because of the use
- The substance is used despite knowledge that the use causes or makes worse physical or psychological problems