**Stages of Change & the CAGE Technique: Delgado- Episode #4**

One of the primary goals of the Stages of Change Model is to help clinicians address and treat substance use problems. Therefore, it is important to have accurate methods to assess patients for substance use issues. Below is a description of the CAGE technique which can be used to determine if alcohol use problems are likely. CAGE stands for Concern/Cut-down, Anger, Guilt, and Eye-opener. Each term represents a type of question physicians can ask patients to identify potential alcohol use issues.

**Useful Definitions**

To use the CAGE technique, simply ask patients the following (or similar) questions. If a patient endorses one of the following CAGE domains consider further screening for alcohol abuse or dependence.

1. **Concern/Cut-down:**
   - “Does your drinking ever concern you?”, “Do you every worry about how much your drink?”, “Have you ever tried to cut-down on alcohol but were unsuccessful?”

2. **Anger:**
   - “Do you ever get angry when others try to talk to you about your drinking?”

3. **Guilt:**
   - “Do you ever feel guilty about drinking alcohol?”, “Have you ever felt guilty about how often/much you drink?”

4. **Eye-opener:**
   - “Do you every have to use alcohol in the morning as an eye-opener?”, “Do you ever use alcohol in the morning to recover from withdrawal?”, “Do you ever use alcohol in the morning to help you get going?”

**Citation:**
Discussion Questions

1. Heather uses the CAGE model to assess Mr. Delgado for alcohol use problems.
   - Which of the CAGE components does Mr. Delgado endorse?
   - Mrs. Delgado answers two of the CAGE questions for Mr. Delgado. How would you integrate his wife’s report in your conceptualization of his drinking?

2. After Heather completes the CAGE assessment she states “After asking this series of questions, I think you do have a problem with alcohol.” Mr. Delgado responds strongly to this statement and says “No, my beer is non-negotiable.”
   - What stage of change is Mr. Delgado in, in terms of his alcohol use?
   - Given this stage of change, do you think Heather’s recommendation that he seek treatment for alcohol use problems was appropriate?
   - If a physician’s recommendations (e.g. treatment) do not match an individual’s stage of change (e.g. pre-contemplation), what effect do you think this has on the doctor-patient relationship?

3. Mr. Delgado and Heather discuss diet change again in this session. Where is Mr. Delgado in terms of stages of change for diet?
   - Has that changed since his previous appointment?

4. Heather states (in reference to behavioral changes) “I’m not doing it (making changes) for me; I’m doing it for you and your family.” (15:00)
   - As we have learned, patient autonomy is a key tenant to patient centered care. Do you think this interaction promotes or inhibits patient autonomy?

5. Heather’s rapport with Mr. Delgado has significantly improved from their first appointment to his one. How has Heather’s interview style changed to account for this improvement?