Resolving Writer’s Block

**Writer’s block** is an example of a “right bright-left brain” conflict. The right, creative side of the brain seeks to create (in this case, write). This induces the left, analytical side to anticipate all the problems that this action could entail, causing it to go into “overdrive” and inhibit the ability to write. An analogy might be someone who wants to drive a car on a trip. Although the car is in gear and the foot is on the gas pedal, the person is not going anywhere because anticipatory anxiety has compelled the driver to put on the emergency brake.

**Strategies for Overcoming Writer’s Block**

**Early Diagnosis**

- Identify what is occurring
- Reassure yourself that this is a temporary setback
- Examine your level of interest in the project

**Treatment**

- Mild blockage
  - Assess the appropriateness of your expectations
  - Give yourself permission to be imperfect (write a draft)
  - Break down the work into manageable tasks
  - Sidestep what blocks you
  - Give yourself positive feedback
  - Optimize your conditions for writing
- Moderate blockage
  - Address “imposter syndrome”
  - “Talk through” your work
  - Try “visioning”
  - Try “mind-mapping”
  - Take a break, seek laughter and relaxation
- Recalcitrant blockage
  - Consider cognitive restructuring
  - Consider a system of negative consequences

**Prevention**

- Write before you have to (start early)
- Work in a supportive group
- Make promises to others
- Draw upon previous work (eg, a grant application)
- Nurture an interest in writing
- Use resources for writers