

# Resilience Spotlight

## NGB Ready & Resilient Schoolhouse



### MRT Skill: Put it in Perspective

#### What is the skill?

Put it in Perspective is a quick skill to help us stop catastrophic thinking in the moment, start thinking more realistically, and develop a plan to help us take action.

#### What competency does the skill build?

Put it in Perspective builds **Optimism** by creating a shift in our thinking to be more realistic and focus on what we can control in order to maintain hope and build confidence in our ability to handle a situation.

#### It's the End of the World

Sometimes, something happens and our brains immediately jump to the unlikely, irrational, worst case outcome—known as catastrophizing.

#### 3 Styles of Catastrophic Thinking

##### Downward Spiral

Our thoughts tell a story that gets increasingly worse more irrational, our brain is like a runaway train.

*"My boss needs to see me ASAP. I'm definitely getting fired. If I lose my job, my wife is leaving for sure. If she leaves, she'll take the kids and I'll never see them again. I'm too old to get remarried, I'll be alone for the rest of my life..."*

##### Scattershot

Our thoughts jump around to several, unconnected, irrational worst case thoughts—like a shot gun blast.

*"My car won't start. I can't afford a major repair, I'll have to take out a loan and be stuck in debt forever. If I miss that meeting at work this morning, I'm going to lose my job. If I have to pay for a new car, I won't make rent and I'll lose my apartment..."*

##### Circling

Our thoughts keep repeating the same one or two worst case over and over, and we keep ruminating, like a broken record.

*"He should have been home an hour ago. He crashed the car and he's gone. I didn't get to say goodbye. He definitely crashed, or he would've called, and he's dead. I never said goodbye. He's gone..."*

**Catastrophizing**

When you waste critical energy ruminating about **irrational worst case** thoughts, which **prevents** you from taking **purposeful** action.

#### 5 Steps to Put it in Perspective



#### Apply it

When you realize that you or someone you care about is **catastrophizing**, start by getting all the worst case thoughts out—write them down or say them out loud. Next, generate some **positive emotion** to help you calm down and get your brain thinking more clearly. You can do this by thinking of unlikely best case thoughts or something else to make you feel some positive emotion. Finally, brainstorm all the realistic, most likely things that could happen and **create a plan** to handle each of those possibilities so that you're ready for anything.