Module 2: Gathering Stories with Respect and Impact

1. Reflection Prompt

Think of one person you'd like to gather a story from.

- Who is it? _____
- Why do you want to hear their story? _____

2. Best Practices Checklist

Use this list before and during your interview/conversation. Check off each step you're ready to follow:

Prepare with Care

- Learn a little about Nikkei history and family terms (*Issei, Nisei, Sansei*).
- Clarify your intention ("I want our children to know where we came from").
- Choose a warm, comfortable setting (kitchen table, garden, living room).

Show Respect

- Begin with gratitude (thank-you card, small gift, fruit like mikan oranges).
- Use respectful forms of address (-san, Obaasan, Ojiisan).
- Be patient with pauses and silences.

Ask with Curiosity

- Use open-ended questions ("What do you remember about…?").
- Follow up gently ("Can you tell me more about that?").
- Let the story flow without rushing.

Handle Difficult Stories Gently

- Ask “Would you like to share…?” instead of pressing.
- Respect “no.”
- Sit quietly if emotions arise.

Honour the Story Beyond the Moment

- Thank them sincerely at the end.
- Share a copy of the recording.
- Visit again — trust deepens over time.

3. Reflection Exercise

Write down one respectful gesture you could include in your next conversation/interview:

_____

_____

Write down one question you’d love to ask:

_____

_____

_____

4. Story Fragment Example

"When I was ten years old, we were told we had to leave our house in Vancouver. My father had just fixed the garden, and my mother had made manju the day before. We were sent to Slocan. I remember the cold winters, but also the kindness of neighbours who shared food. Even though we lost everything, we still gathered for Obon dances. That’s how we survived — with community.”

Use this as inspiration: think about how you might hold space for both hardship and resilience when you listen.

5. Quick Action Step

Finish this sentence:

"I will prepare to gather stories with respect by _____."

6. Inspiration Pull-Quote

"When we gather stories with respect, we aren't just preserving the past — we're strengthening relationships in the present."

Related Toolkit Section: *Best-Practices Guide for Interviewing Elders*