



After the Flowers Fade

A Guide to the Second Month and Beyond



MAPLE RIDGE
FUNERAL CHAPEL

The Long Silence

The Social Cliff

Usually occurring 4–6 weeks post-loss.

- **The Timeline:** The out-of-town relatives have returned home. The casseroles have stopped coming.
- **The Reality:** Community support is front-loaded. Friends return to their routines, assuming the “crisis” is over.
- **The Feeling:** A transition from “ritualized mourning” to “private grief.” You may feel the world has moved on while you are still stuck.





Why Am I So Tired?

The Post-Funeral Crash

Month 1: The Adrenaline

Your body ran on high-octane stress hormones to manage the ‘business of death’—funeral directors, the Coroner, and paperwork.

Month 2: The Repair

The adrenaline runs out. Your body is now in deep repair. Healing the deep wound of loss requires immense metabolic energy.

The Reality

You are effectively running a marathon while sitting still.

Your Brain on Grief

The Protective Power-Down

The Metaphor: Think of your brain as a small business. The **CEO** (Logic & Planning) is on emergency leave. The **Security Guard** (Amygdala/Survival) is now in charge.

- **The Result:** Your brain suppresses focus and planning to use all available energy for processing emotional trauma.
- **The Symptoms:** Standing in the grocery aisle unable to remember a simple list, or losing your keys repeatedly. You aren't "crazy"—you are overwhelmed.



The Body Budget

The Amputation

Loss is experienced as a physiological amputation. Your loved one was part of your biological system—helping regulate your heart rate, sleep, and stress levels.

The Cost

Without this “external regulator,” your body works overtime to stabilize itself.

Physical Signs of the Crash:

- Surging blood pressure and heart rate.
- Immune system suppression.
- “Grief chills” or feelings of physical heaviness.



Fueling the Healing

****The Nanaimo Bar Paradox****



The Depletion

Grief burns through **B-Vitamins** (nervous system fuel) and **Magnesium** (muscle relaxant) rapidly.

The Trap

Comfort foods like Nanaimo bars or white pastas provide a quick dopamine spike but lead to a sugar crash that deepens the "grief fog."

The Need

Your body needs repair materials, not just calories.



Rest in the Rainforest

The Environment

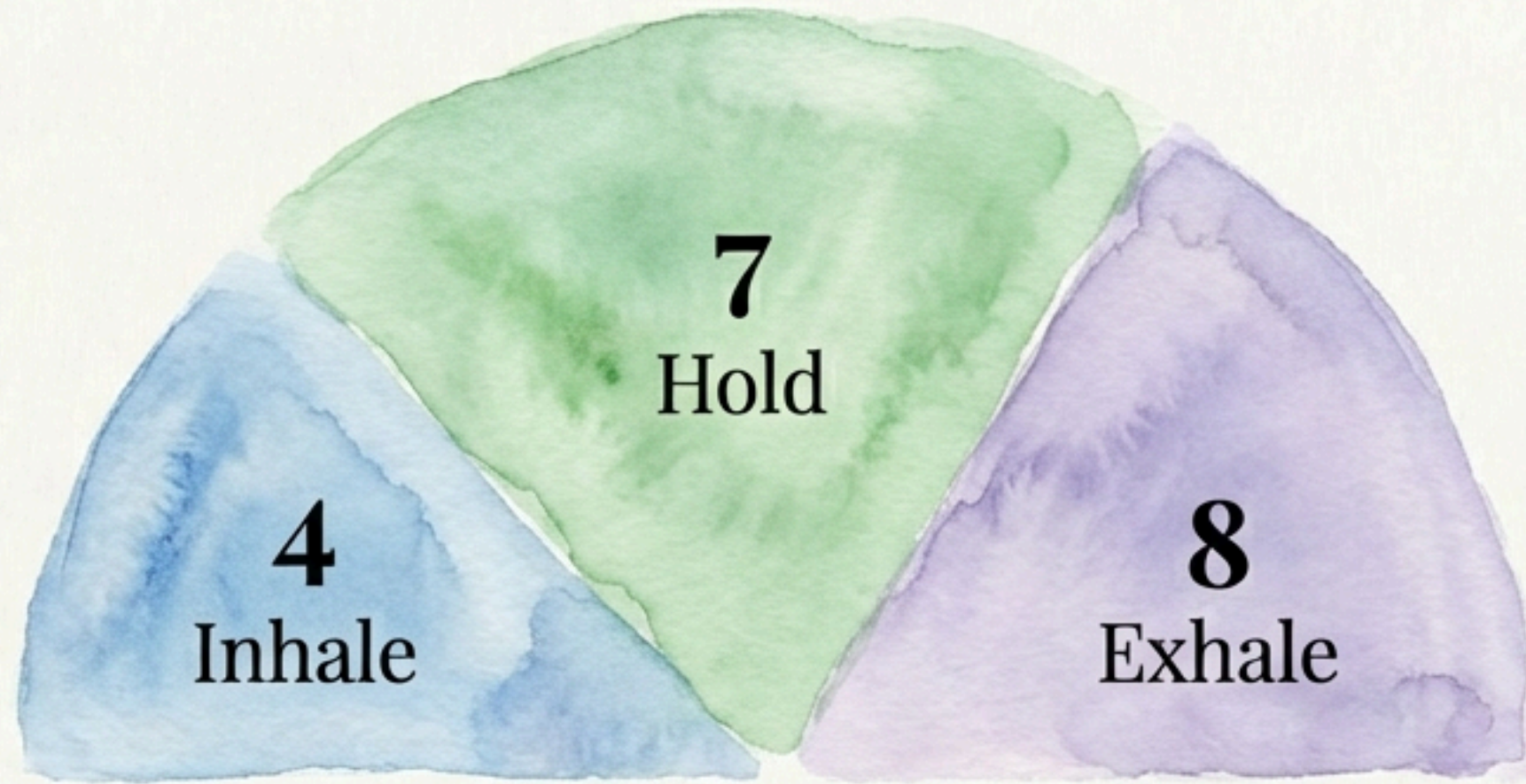
Our cool, damp coastal climate is good for deep sleep. Keep the room cool.

Grief Chills

If you feel the physical cold of grief, wear warm wool socks or take a hot bath to trigger relaxation.

The Sanctuary

Remove blue-light electronics. Let the bedroom be a place of rest, not ruminating.



For the 3:00 AM Wake-Up

*The 4-7-8 Breathing Technique

When the mind spins, manually turn off the 'fight-or-flight' response:

1. **Inhale** through the nose for 4 seconds.
2. **Hold** the breath for 7 seconds.
3. **Exhale** slowly through the mouth for 8 seconds.
Repeat until the nervous system settles.

Nature as a Mirror



The Tides

Grief comes in waves. You cannot stop the tide, but you can learn to stand safely while it washes over you.



The Fog

Like coastal fog, “Grief Brain” causes a loss of bearings. You don’t need to run; just wait for it to lift.

The Weather

Grief can be like an atmospheric river—heavy and persistent. Carry an ‘internal umbrella’ and be patient.

Navigating the Fog

The Crossing

The Second Month is a liminal space. It feels like a crossing in the fog.

The Metaphor

You have left the shore of your old life, but you cannot yet see the new destination.

The Truth

Being suspended in this cold, grey middle ground is not a mistake. It is a necessary part of the travel.



Unique Journeys

Cumulative Grief

For those impacted by the unregulated drug crisis, "bereavement overload" is real.

Indigenous Perspectives

The FNHA emphasizes holistic support—connecting with Elders and Knowledge Keepers.

Silent Grief

Perinatal loss or deaths via MAID (Medical Assistance in Dying) can feel isolating.

Your grief is valid, even if it is complex or "disenfranchised."



Where to Turn

You do not have to wait for a crisis to reach out.

BC Bereavement Helpline

1-877-779-2223 (Connects to 300+ support groups)

HealthLink BC

Dial 8-1-1 (Speak to a nurse/mental health support)

KUU-US Crisis Line

1-800-588-8717 (Indigenous-specific support)

Local Health Authorities

Fraser, Vancouver Coastal, Island, Interior, and Northern Health all offer bereavement services.





The Nurse Log

The Old Growth

In our rainforests, fallen trees become “nurse logs.” They provide the nutrients for new life to grow.

The New Life

Your life has changed. The “old growth” is gone. But the love and memories left behind become the foundation for a new version of yourself.



After the Flowers Fade...

Grief is a landscape, not a task. Be gentle with yourself.