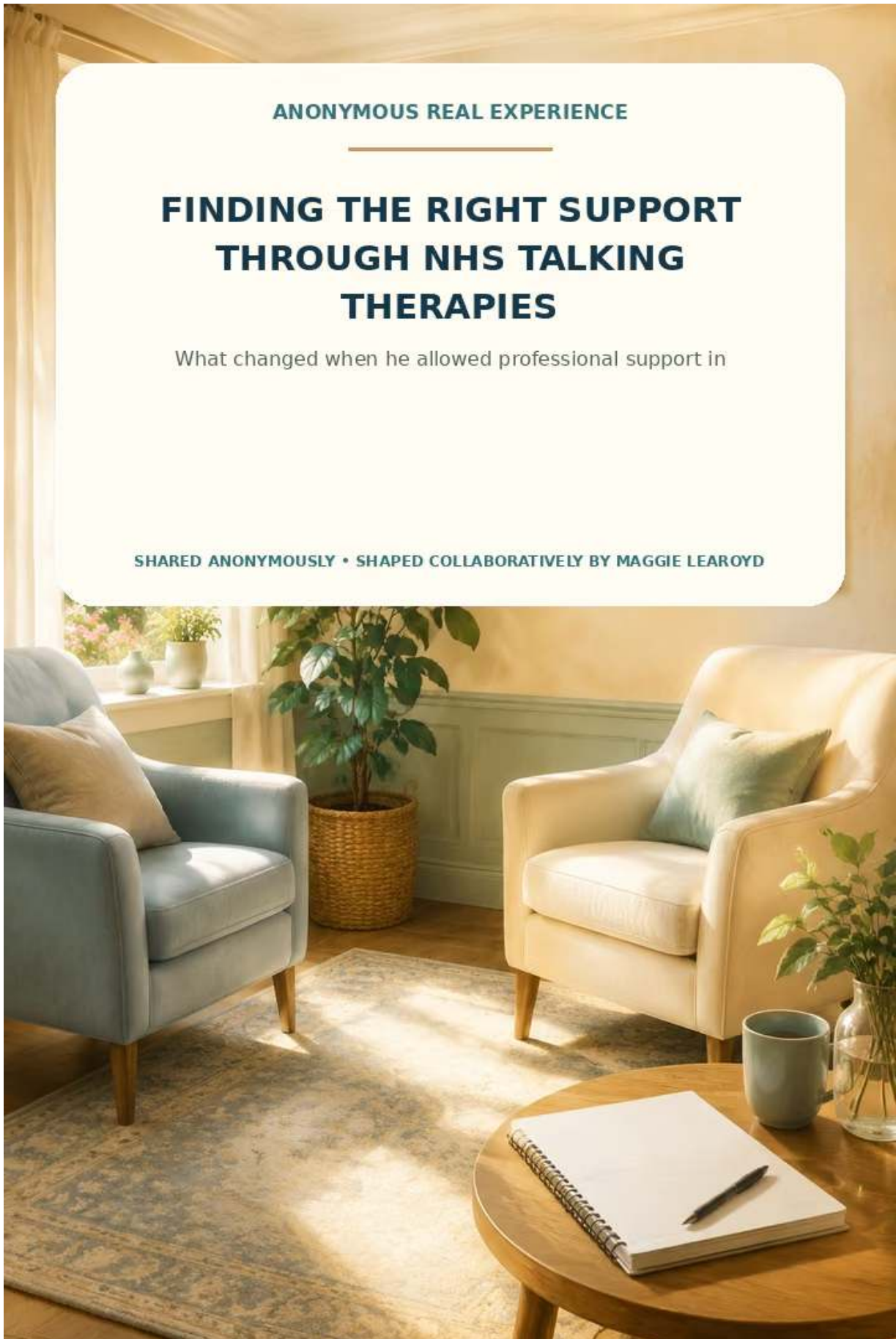


ANONYMOUS REAL EXPERIENCE

FINDING THE RIGHT SUPPORT THROUGH NHS TALKING THERAPIES

What changed when he allowed professional support in

SHARED ANONYMOUSLY • SHAPED COLLABORATIVELY BY MAGGIE LEAROYD



Finding the Right Support Through NHS Talking Therapies

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"I'd spent years telling myself that therapy was for other people. I wasn't in crisis, I was still going to work every day and I was managing to keep everything going at home. So I convinced myself I just needed to work harder and get on with it.

Over time, though, I noticed things changing. I was constantly tired, I couldn't switch my mind off and I was becoming impatient with the people I cared about most. My wife eventually said, 'This isn't you anymore.' Hearing those words was difficult, but deep down I knew she was right.

I booked an appointment with my GP, who suggested I refer myself to NHS Talking Therapies. I nearly cancelled the first appointment because I didn't know what to expect. I imagined sitting in silence or being told everything that was wrong with me.

Instead, I met someone who simply listened. There was no judgement and no pressure. My therapist helped me understand how years of stress, responsibility and never talking about my feelings had affected me. We looked at practical ways of managing anxiety, recognising my stress earlier and communicating more openly with my family.

The biggest surprise was that therapy didn't change who I was. It helped me understand myself better. I became more patient, slept more soundly and found myself enjoying time with my family again instead of constantly feeling on edge.

If someone had asked me a few years ago whether I'd recommend therapy, I would probably have laughed. Today, I'd tell any man that asking for professional support isn't admitting defeat. It's making the decision to invest in your own wellbeing and the people you love.

Making that first appointment felt like the hardest part. Looking back, it was also the beginning of getting my life back."

A Note About This Real Experience

This is a real person's lived experience, shared anonymously in their own thoughts and feelings. The contributor spoke openly about what happened, and Maggie Learoyd shaped the piece collaboratively, preserving their meaning and voice. They want their experience to be heard and understood but have chosen not to be named. Some identifying details may have been changed to protect their privacy.