



**THERAPY
FIRST**



2025 Annual Report





Our Vision

We envision a world where children, adolescents, and young adults experiencing gender dysphoria receive the mental healthcare they deserve to thrive.

Our Mission

We are dedicated to raising the quality of care accessible to youth experiencing gender dysphoria and to driving systemic improvements in the mental health field necessary to meet their needs.



About Us

Therapy First was founded in 2021 in response to concerns that clinicians were not offering gender questioning youth adequate mental health care. In its first two years, the organization published a first-of-its-kind clinical guide, created a directory of qualified therapists, established peer supervision groups, and launched monthly educational webinars.

In 2023, under the leadership of Paul Garcia-Ryan, the organization's operational capacity was enhanced, a strategic roadmap was developed, and it underwent a rebranding meant to better convey its mission and vision. Since then, the organization's visibility and impact have expanded. Therapy First members have presented at professional conferences and published original research, and Paul has been quoted in several major media outlets about the need for better mental health care for gender-questioning youth.

These efforts have been transformative for Therapy First. Today, it has an active board, a growing budget, and programming that is creating meaningful change for both clinicians and the youth they serve.



Friends,

As I reflect on the past year, I am struck by how profoundly our work at Therapy First has grown and how urgently it is needed. What began as a simple conviction has become a movement of more than 400 dedicated mental health professionals, all committed to one guiding principle: that young people experiencing gender dysphoria deserve psychotherapy that's grounded in developmental psychology and the best available evidence.

Every day, clinicians and the families they work with are confronted with a landscape that feels polarized and confusing. The mental health field is at a crossroads. Controversies surrounding medicalized treatment have left many unsure of how to move forward. Families are seeking care they can trust, and professionals are seeking training they can rely on. Therapy First was formed to help address that need.

We, at Therapy First, are uniquely positioned to improve clinical practice and reshape the conversation around this complex and high-stakes area of healthcare through training, research, and public education. To meet this goal, in this last year we've expanded and improved our programming in our three core areas: public education and leadership; training and curriculum for mental health professionals; and professional bridge-building in the field.

This work is only possible because of our many supporters who believe in protecting and promoting thoughtful clinical care and those who understand that respect and curiosity must guide us when supporting young people at their most vulnerable. We're so thankful for those who have helped us get here.

As you read this year's report, I hope you see what I see: a growing organization and community committed to raising the quality of care in this area and to helping young people move toward adulthood with resilience and dignity.

With gratitude,



Paul Garcia-Ryan
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Impact Update

ACHIEVEMENTS AND MOMENTUM

Thanks to the commitment of our supporters, Therapy First made extraordinary strides this year. Notable accomplishments include:

- Content and service delivery growth. Therapy First hosted:
 - 12 professional webinars;
 - 10 clinical case conferences;
 - 96 peer supervision groups; and
 - 48 membership meetings.
- Approved by the American Psychological Association to sponsor continuing education for psychologists.
- Hosted our second multi-day Membership Retreat which served as a professional development intensive for clinicians to come together in person to connect and learn.
- Expanded our organization by adding a Director of Operations and other organizational capacity.
- Launched a new certificate training pilot designed for private practice clinicians seeking advanced skills in working with youth experiencing gender dysphoria.
- Delivered a new six week, nine hour training series for a large community mental health clinic, which serves as a model for trainings that can be done nationwide.
- Helped bring Therapy First's grounded perspective into public conversations by attending and presenting at conferences nationally and internationally, and continuing to be a go-to resource for journalists.



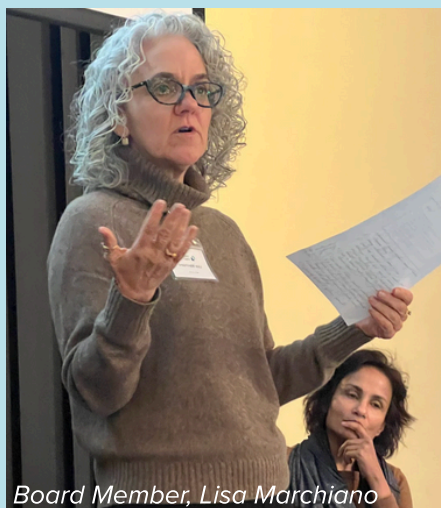
2025 Membership Retreat

Our annual Membership Retreat is a professional development intensive designed to help clinicians better serve gender-questioning youth through lectures, workshops, and discussion groups. In 2025, our retreat was held in Austin, TX, where members came together in person to connect and learn.

"... members of Therapy First are true leaders in the treatment of youth with gender distress ... the best part of the retreat was the opportunity to meet and spend time in person with dear colleagues from far and wide..."



Executive Director Paul Garcia-Ryan



Board Member, Lisa Marchiano

"Attending the Therapy First 2025 retreat was an amazing experience. The sessions were practical and compassionate, and I left with tools I can use right away to better support the patients and families I work with."

"The Therapy First retreat provided me with both the knowledge and skills necessary to take a more informed approach to my work with young people struggling with gender dysphoria. I really enjoyed the opportunity to meet and develop professional relationships with fellow attendees in an environment that I found to be both supportive and safe, and am grateful to have left with new colleagues I feel I can depend on for future council and support in this complicated field."

2025 by the Numbers

400+
members

Our membership has grown to over 400 therapists practicing in 41 states and 19 countries.

Therapy First makes an average of 60 direct referrals for families to therapists per month.

60
monthly
referrals

3,000+
monthly
website
visits

More than 3,000 unique visits to the Therapy First website each month.

Looking Ahead:

BUILDING SUSTAINABILITY & PARTNERSHIP

Meeting the needs of gender dysphoric youth is one of the most urgent and complex challenges facing the mental health field today. Treatment approaches must be brought in line with developmental psychology and the best available evidence, and the mental health care young people receive should be individualized and provided with dignity and respect.

To truly shift the trajectory, we must grow our core programs and build on our operational foundation to sustain our work.

In 2026, Therapy First will: grow our reach, provide more resources for clinicians and families; and, most importantly, increase our capacity to help meet the needs of youth experiencing gender dysphoria.



Support Therapy First

Your contribution can help us move forward in this urgent, life-changing mission to improve a broken system. Your support will help build a future where every young person gets the care they deserve. Together, we can make a lasting difference.

If you would like to donate to support our mission, please email us at info@therapyfirst.org or scan the QR code below to visit our website.

Therapy First is 501(c)3 non-profit organization. Donations are tax-deductible to the fullest extent allowed by law.



For more information:
THERAPYFIRST.ORG

1207 Delaware Ave #4791
Wilmington, DE 19806

