

RISE- Reducing Isolation Through Support & Empowerment

The Center for Sexuality & Gender Diversity – LGBTQ+ Priority Population



Our Website
QR Code



Our Linktree
QR Code



RISE Description & Implementation

The Center's Community- Defined Evidence Program (CDEP), Reducing Isolation through Support and Empowerment (RISE), seeks to prevent and/or reduce depression, anxiety, self-harm, and post-traumatic stress disorder resulting from isolation, discrimination, and oppression. In Phase II, RISE served individuals in the 2SLGBTQIA+ community, and the broader community in Bakersfield.

The Center's Community- Defined Evidence Program (CDEP), The components of RISE are:

- Supportive Workshops around marginalized identities
- Affirming 1-1 counseling for the community
- Cultural Competency Education and Training for local behavioral health professionals
- Counseling Intern Program for affirming training and workforce development
- Affirming Programs and Events for Youth, Teens, Young Adults, and Adults in Bakersfield and Kern County



Overview

The Center for Sexuality & Gender Diversity is located at 707 18th St. in Bakersfield, Kern County, CA

CSGD staffed by amazing community professionals who bring passion, care, love, and joy to their work. Shoutout to our team carrying out this work!

- Dani Muñoz (they/them)- Executive Director
- Christine Paulsen (she/her)- Director of Mental Health Services
- Artemis Zene (they/them)- Community Engagement Liaison
- Fry Friend (he/they/ze)- Youth & Young Adult Programming Coordinator
- Iz/Isaac McCann (any pronouns)- Adult Programming Coordinator

Evaluation Design and Methods

Both the RISE program and this evaluation were rooted in the community-based participatory research (CBPR) approach. Evaluation was conducted throughout Phase 2 (2023-mid 2025).

- The Center worked with Health Management Associates, a national research and consulting firm skilled in conducting CBPR for the social determinants of health with 2SLGBTQIA+ communities, to develop and conduct this evaluation.
- The evaluation included both quantitative and qualitative data collection efforts, including participation data, surveys, focus groups, and interviews.
- Participants were Teens, Young Adults, and Adults who were counseling clients, workshop and program participants, or interns.

* The Center went through 4 Executive Director Changes since 2023 which impacted our numbers but data shows upward trend with stability	2023	2024	Mid-2025
Workshop Rotations Held and number of participants	6 rotations held 109 participants	4 rotations held 80 Participants	4 rotations held 140 Participants
Adult & All Ages Affirming Events Held and number of participants	27 events held 165 participants	43 events held 358 participants	81 events held 995 participants
Youth & Young Adult Program Events	9 events held 89 participants	14 events held 44 participants	16 events held 87 participants
Number of Interns and Counseling Sessions Held	7 interns 1290 sessions held	8 interns 676 sessions held	5 interns 507 sessions held

RISE Evaluation findings demonstrate that The Center has successfully established itself as a vital community resource that effectively addresses identity-related mental health concerns while simultaneously revealing critical gaps in broader resilience support and systemic accessibility barriers.

- The Center demonstrates exceptional success in fostering 2SLGBTQIA+ identity acceptance (**100% positive attitudes**) and community belonging (**90% feeling like community members**).
- However, participants show concerning deficits in stress management and recovery capabilities (**64–80% reporting limited confidence in handling stress**).
- *This paradox identified through data triangulation suggests that while community-based identity affirmation effectively prevents identity-related mental health problems, it does not automatically translate to broader psychological resilience skills.*

Quantitative data from surveys were analyzed using Excel. Because of small sample sizes, no inferential statistics could be run. Therefore, analyses are limited to for descriptive analyses, such as participant demographic description, participation, and program monitoring.

Areas of Convergence

Community Connectedness and Belonging: Quantitative survey data and qualitative findings across all focus groups demonstrate remarkable convergence regarding The Center's success in fostering community belonging. *Survey data shows 90 percent of respondents agree that they feel like community members, while qualitative findings consistently describe The Center as "welcoming" and fostering "lasting friendships that extend beyond the physical Center." This convergence across methods and participant groups provides strong evidence of The Center's community-building effectiveness.*

Staff Cultural Responsiveness: Data triangulation reveals unanimous positive perceptions across all sources. *Survey data shows 91–100 percent of respondents strongly agreeing that staff respect their diverse identities, while focus group participants across age groups consistently praised staff for "making everyone feel welcome" and respecting cultural differences.*

Transportation as Primary Barrier: *Qualitative findings demonstrate complete convergence across youth and adult focus groups in identifying transportation as the most significant participation barrier.* Youth participants described "20 minutes plus having to walk 15 minutes from the bus stop," while adults characterized Bakersfield's bus system as "terrible," with service ending at 6:00 p.m. *This consistent finding across participant groups indicates a systematic accessibility challenge.*

Areas of Divergence

Resilience and Coping Capacity: A concerning divergence emerges between quantitative resilience measures and qualitative descriptions of personal growth. While survey data reveals that 64–80 percent of respondents report limited confidence in handling stress and recovering from setbacks, qualitative findings emphasize personal development, with participants describing becoming "a lot more social" and "more comfortable speaking up." *This divergence suggests either measurement limitations or that The Center's community-building benefits may not translate to broader stress management capabilities.*

Gender Identity Pride: *A significant divergence appears in survey data regarding gender identity, where 60 percent reported positive attitudes about their gender identity but only 10 percent claimed to feel proud of it. This internal inconsistency within the quantitative data warrants further exploration and suggests potential measurement issues or complex identity dynamics not captured in qualitative findings.*

Method-Specific Insights

Quantitative-Only Findings: *Survey data uniquely revealed the concerning resilience gaps and mixed future outlook (only 55% expecting quality of life improvements), patterns not explicitly discussed in focus groups. This suggests participants may not spontaneously identify these challenges as priorities.*

Qualitative-Only Findings: Focus groups uniquely identified organizational instability impacts, specific programming preferences (structured vs. open format), and detailed suggestions for improvement. Interview data alone revealed the extent of capacity strain on the clinical supervisor and infrastructure gaps.

Next Steps for The Center

Program Development Recommendations based on Evaluation:

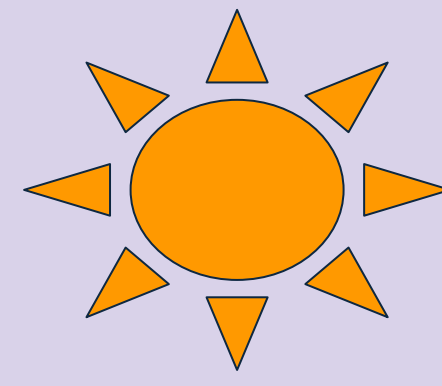
- **Integrated Resilience Programming:** Develop explicit stress management and coping skills programming that builds upon the strong community foundation while addressing the identified resilience gaps. This programming should complement rather than replace community-building activities. **** developed in 2025 and initiated starting in 2026**
- **Transportation Equity Initiative:** Implement comprehensive transportation support including carpooling coordination, shuttle services from transit centers, and virtual/hybrid programming options to address the universally identified accessibility barrier. **** not yet started- however The Center moved and consolidated to one building in a more accessible location at the beginning of 2026.**
- **Targeted TGNC Inclusion:** Develop specific outreach and programming strategies to address transgender feminine underrepresentation, potentially including targeted support groups and mentorship programs. **** Initiated development and working to find community facilitators**
- **Intersectional Programming Expansion:** Build upon the identified need for POC-specific programming by developing systematic intersectional approaches that address the complex identity dynamics revealed in qualitative findings. **** initiated development with goal for a BIPOC workshop space starting fall 2026**

Mental Health Training Internships

Gender Health Center (Sacramento, California)

Priority population: LGBTQ+

Local evaluation Time-Period: March 2022 - June 2025



CDEP Purpose, Description and Implementation

Mental Health Provider Training Program Training to Serve LGBTQ+ Communities

1. Improve access to quality mental healthcare;
2. Bolster the capability of counseling trainees and doctoral interns to deliver culturally attuned, humble, and ethical service;
3. Provide community members with diverse healing pathways.

Program Components

Queer-informed Narrative Therapy

"The person is not the problem, the problem is the problem."

- Michael White + David Epston



Evaluation Design and Methods

PARTICIPANT-ORIENTED EVALUATION APPROACH

Document/
Curriculum
Review

Trainee Exit
Interviews

Community
Advisory
Board
Feedback

Counseling
Trainee
Survey

Results

50+

Students Trained

15

Universities represented throughout California and U.S.

2205

Hours of introductory onboarding training completed



Images above are of community based events. Left to right: 1) Queerly Be(Loved) student-led talking circle with on-site screen printing; 2) Counseling Program Manager, Charlie Hutchinson, (any/all pronouns) tabling; 3) Ari Lozano (elle/they) Director of Mental Health and Chioko Juliette Grevious (she/her) Registered Psychological Associate Student Clinician presenting a training.



Gender Health Center alumni, current students, and clinical supervisors, varying from 2015-2025, united at the International Narrative Therapy Conference in Sacramento, CA in October 2025.

Exit Interview Student Feedback

"I could tell that GHC was different because I was being asked about racism, structural oppression, and power and privilege. I realized that this wasn't just a counseling position - it was about engaging deeply in the kind of justice-centered work I want to do"



Key Takeaways & Next Steps

Key Takeaways

GHC training emphasizes *cultural humility, critical thinking, collaboration, and authenticity.*

Exit interviews indicated that trainees value both technical counseling skill development and supportive clinical supervision fostering emotional resilience.

Trainees learned therapeutic approaches to provide community-engaged care, showing up as advocates, supporters, and providing a trusted presence both inside and outside clinical spaces.

Next Steps

Recommendations: (1) Expand interactive learning opportunities; (2) Enhance cultural and gender diversity within CORE training materials; (3) Increase structured onboarding and mentorship; and (4) Strengthen feedback loops between trainees, trainers, and supervisors..

Acknowledgments

This work funding support from the California Department of Public Health, Office of Health Equity's California Reducing Disparities Project, Contract # 15-10619

Report Contributors: Ari Lozano (they/elle), Director of Mental Health; Charlie Hutchinson (all/any) Counseling Program Manager; David "Rock" Nylund (he/him), Clinical Training Director; Jenn Williams (she/her) Director of Finance; Malakai Coté, (he/they/fam), Executive Director & Local Evaluator. Community Advisory Board Members: Angel Vogel (she/her); Miles Harris (he/him), Jude Patton (he/him), Daniel Domaguin (he/him), and Jacob Cepollina (she/they).

Contact: Dr. Malakai Coté: malakai@ghcmail.org

Openhouse

Ariel Mellinger, Sylvia Vargas, and Dani Soto, PhD

Visit us online!
openhousesf.org



CDEP Purpose, Description and Implementation

Program Purpose, Goals, and Focus

LGBTQ+ older adults experience isolation and mental health disparities at rates 2-3 times higher than their heterosexual peers. Openhouse's Community Defined Evidence Practice (CDEP) addresses these disparities through culturally competent, integrated programming that successfully reduces isolation, improves mental health, and builds authentic community. The Openhouse CDEP aims to reduce social isolation, improve mental health, and address social determinants like housing insecurity.

Target Population

The program serves LGBTQ+ older adults, including low-income seniors, transgender gender-nonconforming and intersex (TGNCI) individuals, LGBTQ+ people of color, and adults with disabilities.

Key Program Components

Includes Mental Health Program, TGNCI community programming, Club 75 Adult Day Services, and cultural competency trainings.

Community-Driven, Affirming Approach

Utilizes trauma-informed, community-informed "no wrong door" model affirming intersecting identities to foster trust and engagement.

Evaluation Design and Methods

Mixed-Methods Approach: The evaluation combined quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews for a comprehensive program assessment.

Data Collection Techniques: Quantitative data included surveys on mental health and loneliness; qualitative data included focus groups and interviews.

Cultural Knowledge Integration: Centering participant voice and contextualizing data ensured evaluation reflected LGBTQ+ older adults' realities.

Evaluation Period: May 2022 - May 2025

Results

Reduced Social Isolation

Programs **reduced social isolation and stress** among LGBTQ+ older adults and their caregivers, promoting community connection.

Improved Mental Health

Mental health improved with **fewer poor mental health days and decreased loneliness** across all measured domains.

Cultural Competency and Trust

Cultural competency and trust were identified as key drivers of the program's positive impact and effectiveness.

Training and Empowerment

Training **increased caregiving confidence and capacity** to counter discrimination among participants.



Mental Health Program

! 33% LESS poor mental health days

↑ Coping Skills ↓ Loneliness

! Cultural competency + community-based delivery model = success

Club 75

LGBTQ+ Affirming Adult Day Program

! 100% Reduced Isolation
! 100% Caregiver Stress Relief
! 64% Improved Physical health

TGNCI Programming

! Safe transportation = safe access to affirming programming
! Create authentic spaces that felt like a family atmosphere
! Increase in quality and quantity of program: evolved Openhouse from service provider to community builder

Cultural Competency Training

! 82 - 87% Increased ability to serve LGBTQ+ Older Adults
! Practical skills gained
! Deeper knowledge and understanding gained

"Openhouse was the first place that made me feel accepted [as intersex]. Staff were helpful with locating housing when I had knee surgery and Openhouse provided education to the Salvation Army regarding what it was to be intersex when I faced some bias because of who I am. I owe my life to Openhouse."
- Openhouse Participant

Next Steps and Key Takeaways

Culturally Affirming Models

Community-based models improve mental health and reduce isolation among LGBTQ+ older adults through cultural affirmation.

Access and Engagement Factors

Transportation and trust-building are critical for improving access and engagement with community services.

Future Implementation Recommendations

Future work will focus on continuing to prioritize high levels of communication, expanding outreach, maintaining quality, reinforcing training, and ensuring sustainable transportation.

Sustainability and Systems Transformation

Openhouse's intentional growth of programs supports equity, sustainability, scalability, and systems transformation in LGBTQ+ affirming aging services.

Openhouse's models can be scaled in other communities with intensive training from and partnership with Openhouse.




Acknowledgments

- This work was made possible in part by funds received from the California Department of Public Health, Office of Health Equity's California Reducing Disparities Project, Contract #16-10530
- Openhouse would like to thank the following staff for their invaluable contributions: Liz Copp, Carla Peña, Aiden Goodwin, Lunae Chrysanta, Taylor Butelle, J Jha, sylvie bloom, saroj mitti, Isaiah Meade, Su Waqa, Sandra Rivas, Jeffrey Basille, and Carrie Schell.
- openhousesf.org, (415) 295-8996, San Francisco



WHERE YOU CAN VISIT US!

**145 E. Weber Ave
Stockton, CA 95202**



Communities Served in the San Joaquin County

- Diverse LGBTQIAP+ Community
- Rural Spanish speaking communities
- Youth and foster care agencies
- Elderly and retired LGBT+ members
- Mental Healthcare Clients

The Dream Team

John Alita
Executive Director
jalita@sjpride.center

Phillip Britton
Director, Programs and Community
pbritton@sjpride.center

Jonathan Lopez
Training and Development Manager
jlopez@sjpride.center

James Patnaude
Transgender Program Coordinator
jpatnaude@sjpride.center

Albert David
Associate Clinical Social Worker
adavid@sjpride.center



THE CULTIVATING ACCEPTANCE PROGRAM

The San Joaquin Pride Center's (SJPC) Community Defined Evidence Program is designed to **cultivate acceptance of LGBT+ youth by creating safe school and community environments**, supporting families in accepting and embracing their LGBT+ youth, and providing support to youth, friends, and family throughout the coming-out process. A key part of this work is to provide holistic support for our youth by integrating modern technologies, such as social media campaigns and telehealth, that are integral to their lives. Our program also:

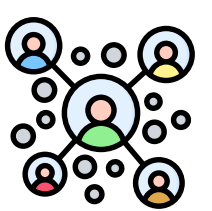
- Engages public schools, foster care systems, and community partners across San Joaquin County.
- Supports LGBT+ youth mental wellness.
- Provides cultural diversity training, workshops, educational campaigns, and counseling.
- Promotes acceptance and reduces risk factors using a fact-based, motivational approach.
- Developed to meet local LGBT+ mental health needs
- Aligns with the CRDP Strategic Plan.
- Addresses discrimination, social exclusion, insurance access, environmental conditions, and quality of care in the Central Valley.



GETTING TO THE FINISH LINE



SJPC cultivates acceptance in schools through our Youth Empowerment Program, providing LGBT+ youth with tools to advocate for safer spaces and support for acceptance in their schools. The Cultural Awareness and Diversity Training program trains school administrators, educators, and non-classified staff to improve school climates for LGBT+ students and to be more tolerant and accepting of diversity. Creating Safe Spaces is for youth to change school culture and be aware of privilege, and empowering them to speak up and support LGBT+ youth.



Create a Network of Acceptance: By reaching out to other community-based organizations in our county, we have built an organized system of referrals and connections. We can tailor an action plan for each individual based on their immediate and long-term needs. By working with and training other agencies and care spaces, we have expanded the services we can offer our members.



Culturally Competent Mental Health Services and Workforce: SJPC provides culturally competent preventive mental health support services to LGBT+ youth and their families. Services are provided on-site by our full-time clinician and clinician interns, who offer life-coaching support and care through external agencies. These services generally average 2 to 4 months for LGBT+ youth coming out or transition process, and up to 3 months for mental health maintenance and care.

HOW WE ARE GOING TO BE THE CHANGE

Our target population for our CDEP will be middle school and high school age youth, their families, the schools, and other agencies that interact and impact LGBT+ youth. SJPC intends to demonstrate the effectiveness of our Community-Defined Evidence Program by identifying the following outcomes:

- Increase acceptance behaviors to reduce mental health risk factors for LGBT+ youth.
- Partner with local schools and school districts to track progress with parents, students, and educators
- Monitor improvements in school climate and graduation rates for LGBT+ students.
- Use school data, the California Healthy Kids Survey, and in-house surveys
- Track growth in culturally competent healthcare providers
- Increase workplace understanding of LGBT+ competency
- Provide tailored training and tools to community organizations to strengthen LGBT+ inclusion



Follow-ups and on site support will continue years after we have helped them create a safe space and environment.

OUR PHASE 2 ACCOMPLISHMENTS



- CRDP Phase II evaluation data reflect improved school safety, with 66.6% of students feeling comfortable reporting bullying to staff.
- Increased cultural competency; 96.8% of training participants reported greater knowledge, and 92.8% reported increased sensitivity.
- Training outcomes reflect practical impact, with 89% of participants able to immediately apply LGBTQ+ inclusive practices.
- Cultural Acceptance Workshop evaluations confirmed the training's effectiveness, with 100% of school staff finding it beneficial and reporting increased understanding of LGBT+ culture.
- Youth Empowerment Summit surveys showed a positive impact on school climate, with 91.7% of youth reporting their school is safe for LGBT+ students.
- Community survey results show greater impact, with 76.2% of respondents stating SJPC is effective in promoting LGBTQ+ acceptance.
- Evaluation findings showed 72% of community members reported their environment as a safe space for LGBT+ individuals.
- Expanded mental health access, with counseling services increasing from 24 clients in 2023 to 49 in 2024.
- During Phase II, hundreds of youth received culturally competent counseling, peer support, and prevention-focused mental health services.

WHAT THE FUTURE HOLDS

We are evolving into a Behavioral Health & Navigation Hub. Building on our legacy as a trusted LGBT+ space, we are expanding to meet both social and behavioral health needs across San Joaquin County.

- Focus areas:
- Youth support & school-based stigma reduction
 - Expanded clinical services
 - Formalized case management
 - Substance use harm reduction services

Stronger impact. Measurable outcomes. Deeper care.

"...it was the dance that kept us in the fight—because it was the dance we were fighting for."
— Dan Savage

Trans:Thrive at San Francisco Community Health Center: How We Cultivate Belonging, Hope, Joy, and Thriving



OUR LOCATION

As part of San Francisco Community Health Center (SFCHC), Trans:Thrive is a community drop-in space located in **San Francisco, CA**.

Photo Description: Our 8000 square-foot space (opened in early 2023) is the first stand-alone facility of its size dedicated to trans people's lives in SF.



WHO WE SERVE

Trans:Thrive exists to create safe spaces, services, and events for the entire trans, nonbinary, and gender-expansive community in San Francisco.

- We are a **“for us, by us”** organization – we are led by and for trans, nonbinary, and gender-expansive people. We are powered by a self-generating cycle of leadership development, meaning that our leaders mentor future and emerging leaders.
- We strive to be **accessible, low-barrier**, and to center clients who are **multiply marginalized**, such as folks who are: Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC), unhoused or marginally housed, living with or at risk for HIV, survivors of violence, and eligible for Medi-Cal.

CONTACTS

Nicky (Tita Aida) Calma (she/her)
Managing Director
titaaida@sfccommunityhealth.org

Jahnell Butler (she/her)
Director of Trans Services
jahnell@sfccommunityhealth.org

Kiki “Mx Kiki Krunch” Lopez (she/her)
Program Manager, CRDP and Stop the Hate
kiki@sfccommunityhealth.org

Sarah Illing (she/her)
Local Evaluator for Trans:Thrive (CRDP)
Sarah.illing@gmail.com

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Trans:Thrive is a Community-Defined Evidence Project (CDEP) for the LGBTQ+ priority population, supported by the California Department of Public Health Office of Health Equity, through a California Reducing Disparities Project (CRDP) Phase 2 Extension grant funded by the State of California General Fund.



This poster summarizes Trans:Thrive's CRDP-funded work and will be presented at the annual CRDP convening in 2026.

OVERVIEW

Our Goals

Trans:Thrive is a community-based drop-in center led for and by transgender, nonbinary, and gender-expansive people in San Francisco. Our name is an acronym which stands for: Transgender Resource and Neighborhood Space (Trans), and Transgender Health & Resource Initiative for Vital Empowerment (Thrive). Our goals expand beyond merely reducing disparities and health symptoms: **we are grounded in a vision of universal thriving**, where clients can build protective factors and reach their aspirations.

Compared to cisgender people, trans people experience higher rates of discrimination, violence, homelessness, isolation, psychological distress, and suicidality. We aim to help reduce these disparities by promoting clients' sense of belonging, access to trans-led and trans-centered health services, social support, basic needs supports, and joy through self-expression.

Trans:Thrive Program Components

As a trans-led and client-centered space, our programming responds directly to clients' needs, barriers, goals, and cultural values. Below are **5 core program components** which staff designed, and later articulated, as “community-defined evidence practices” supported by CRDP.

Drop-in center , a welcoming “one-stop shop”	5 days a week (15 hrs/week) of community-based drop-in space with hot meals, social support, case management, referrals and system navigation, and basic needs items (e.g., hygiene kits, snacks, and harm reduction supplies). Ongoing community outreach and collaboration with local community organizations.
Trans-led activities that promote joy, fun, and self-expression	Weekly events such as Bravo Martes (Spanish-language games with prizes), a writing and poetry group, and Friday night dinners with karaoke. Large-scale special events, such as TransGiving and Sparkle Soiree. Digital storytelling workshops in which participants can share personal stories and the impact of Trans:Thrive on their lives.
Extravagant shopping experiences to promote healthcare engagement, self-expression, joy, and safety	Monthly gender-affirming shopping experiences (SHE Boutique and Folk ‘n’ Swagger) where clients can select gender-affirming clothing and accessories. These events include a wide range of sizes and styles, and a safe environment to explore gender expression. Clients earn credits (points) to attain highly sought-after items by engaging in services. These programs were designed to incentivize healthcare engagement.
Trans-led social support groups	Trans-led social support groups that center specific populations, such as: a neurodivergent group, a transmasculine support group, and 50+ and Fabulous.
Therapist-led meditation group	Weekly mindfulness-based group, Transformative Mindfulness.

OUR LOCAL EVALUATION

We conducted an exploratory evaluation to assess the implementation of Trans:Thrive between May 2022-May 2025 (the CRDP Phase 2 Extension period), which marked a period of significant growth for Trans:Thrive.

Key learning questions:

1. In what ways might Trans:Thrive influence clients' mental health and well-being?
2. What core components of Trans:Thrive's model are most essential for the program's success (particularly in reducing mental health disparities)?
3. How could Trans:Thrive be improved?

Evaluation approach:

- Our evaluation primarily draws from qualitative data sources, including interviews with Trans:Thrive clients (n=14) and staff members (n=7), program-level data, landscape research, and ongoing conversations with leadership and staff.
- **Key Strength:** Our local evaluator and Trans:Thrive staff collaborated closely on designing and implementing the evaluation, ensuring that our approach is grounded in the expertise of trans, nonbinary, and gender-expansive people who have directly experienced and led public health programs for LGBTQ+ communities.
- **Key Limitation:** Our ability to analyze program data was limited by data system barriers at the time of data collection. For example, previously, Trans:Thrive primarily collected intake assessments and attendance data on paper which limited our ability to compare the same client over time; Trans:Thrive is currently transitioning to electronic data collection via iPads.

KEY FINDINGS

- 1) **With a larger and more welcoming location, Trans:Thrive has increased its reach as a drop-in community center that supports trans people's existence.** Trans:Thrive's new space is the first stand-alone facility of its size dedicated to improving trans people's lives in San Francisco. Interviewees described this space as a “refreshing” safe haven, “a sense of home that I may not have had otherwise,” “a mini family reunion,” and place to make friends.

~557 unique clients served
between May 2022-May 2025

~200 unique clients per month

[estimated # of clients during CRDP Phase 2 Extension]

“The new space really gave us opportunities to be creative on what we can offer the trans community.”

– Trans:Thrive leader



Photo Description: Waiting room at Trans:Thrive. It features a welcoming reception desk, comfortable furniture (couches and chairs), a TV on the wall, and a trans flag banner.

- 2) **Staff intentionally design Trans:Thrive as a client-centered, compassionate antidote to various forms of pain that many clients experience, such as isolation, exclusion, hopelessness, homelessness, and discrimination.** Trans:Thrive supports clients' mental health and well-being by helping to cultivate their sense of belonging, hope, joy, and thriving.

Theme

How Clients, Volunteers, and Staff Describe Trans:Thrive

BELONGING

A safe haven and a “home base.” A radically welcoming place to go where everyone is valued, where people can gather to celebrate holidays, to mourn, and to meet friends. A low-barrier “one-stop shop” that can help clients access multiple types of services to support their holistic well-being.

HOPE

Staff and volunteers as role models (or possibility models), inspiring people to believe in themselves and see a positive vision for their future. A radical, collective re-conditioning (challenging the way many trans people are conditioned to feel limited, alone, and without hope). A place to reinforce messages of community resilience (“this isn't our first rodeo”).

JOY

Fun, affirming shopping experiences (through SHE Boutique and Folk ‘n’ Swagger) where clients feel confident, safe, and cared for. Creative, playful activities like karaoke, playing games, and creating artwork. A place filled with laughter.

THRIVING

A beautiful self-generating cycle of leaders and role models. A place where staff are consistent, reliable, and help clients break down their goals into manageable steps. A place that offers (or connects clients with) resources such as therapy, education and employment support, case management, housing referrals, and affirming healthcare.

“[Trans:Thrive] really saved my life, and I'm eternally grateful. And now I get to work with the agency; I get to be one of the staff and share the gift that they gave me.”



Photo Description: Photograph of a person holding a large transgender pride flag with blue, pink, and white stripes waving against a clear sky during an outdoor event.

OUR NEXT STEPS

Trans:Thrive and San Francisco Community Health Center will continue to show up relentlessly as leaders to expand our capacity, deepen our impact, and create a possibility model for spaces that center trans people's joy, belonging, and thriving during escalating threats. As of 2026, our next steps and aspirations include:

- Secure a larger, long-term space to make Trans:Thrive a permanent sanctuary, refuge, and community hub for trans people in San Francisco
- Hire more providers and increase services offered (e.g., gender-affirming care clinic, therapy, case management)
- Develop data infrastructure and learning routines which allow staff to track and monitor clients' progress over time
- Continue to oppose funding cuts to LGBTQ+ healthcare and anti-LGBTQ+ policy (e.g., engaging state legislature and our local Health Commission)
- Continue to expand and protect spaces and services that improve trans people's quality of life
- Continue to deepen Trans:Thrive's partnership with Taimon-Booton Navigation Center (TBNC), a 75-bed emergency shelter which prioritizes safe housing for transgender, gender non-conforming & intersex people. (SFCHC assumed management of TBNC in 2024.)

“When it came to me being homeless, they really did hold my hand through the whole thing, and they just really were there in my like true time of need that... I just didn't know how I was going to get through.”



Photo Description: Photograph of a colorful parade float from SF Pride 2025 featuring the San Francisco Community Health Center as the organizational grand marshal. The float is decorated with pink, blue, and white fringe, adorned with flowers, and carries people celebrating with rainbow flags and festive attire along a city street.