



## A Primer on Pronouns

Pronouns are linguistic tools that we use to refer to people. The most commonly known pronouns are he/him/his, she/her/hers, and they/them/theirs, but there are many more pronouns that people use to refer to themselves. It is respectful and important to give people the opportunity to state their pronouns, so we know the correct pronouns to use when referring to them.

### Things to Consider

- **Pronouns replace people's names.** (e.g., "Sam is nice" → "He is nice"). We should give pronouns the same respect that we give people's names!
- **Pronouns add gender.** This means that pronouns can also add implicit assumptions and associations we have about different genders.
- **Using pronouns is not mandatory.** You don't need to use pronouns. If not using pronouns, you can use the person's name, language like "the person," or a combination of both.
- **Every pronoun is valid, even if you've never heard of it before.** Whatever a person tells you should be respected!
- **Please avoid using the term "preferred."** Generally, a person's pronouns aren't about a "preference." Using this term may accidentally insinuate that using the correct pronouns for someone is optional.

### How to Ask for Someone's Pronouns

- A good way to ask for someone's pronouns is to **offer your name and pronouns first.** By doing so, you're indirectly asking the person you're speaking with to share the same information.
- Simply ask **"What are your pronouns?"**
- It is good practice to **explain why you are asking for someone's pronouns.** For instance, you can say something like "I want to make sure I get your pronouns right" or "I want to be sure that I introduce you correctly."
- You can use a **combination of these techniques** to ask for someone's pronouns. Some people may be confused and you may need to explain to them the importance of asking for pronouns.

The above information was adapted from "A Few Pronoun Best [Preferred?] Practices," located at <http://itspronouncedmetrosexual.com/2018/04/pronoun-best-preferred-practices/>

## Gender Neutral Pronouns

A gender neutral is a pronoun that doesn't associate a gender with the individual who is being discussed. Gender neutral pronouns are often used by those who identify as transgender or genderqueer. They/them/theirs and ze/zir/zirs are two of the most commonly used gender neutral pronouns. More information on gender neutral pronouns available at:

<https://genderneutralpronoun.wordpress.com/>

<b>They/them/theirs</b>	<b>Ze/zir/zirs</b>
They finished the exam	Ze finished the exam
They turned in their exam	Ze turned in zir exam
That exam is theirs	That exam is zirs