



Let's talk about...

PRONOUNS

What are Pronouns?

Pronoun: any of a small set of words in a language that are used as substitutes for nouns or noun phrases and whose referents are named or understood in the context - Merriam-Webster Dictionary.

Why are Pronouns so important?

As the definition demonstrates, pronouns provide understanding and context when speaking to others. Many also see pronouns as a label, and to use the correct pronouns when addressing someone shows respect. Neglecting to use someone's preferred pronouns can make that person feel disrespected, invalidated, dismissed and alienated.

How do I use Pronouns inclusively?

Pronouns often carry a categorization of gender. You might have heard these referred to as "masculine" and "feminine" pronouns such as: she/her/hers and he/him/his.

Many people do not identify as strictly masculine or feminine and it is best not to assume that you know someone's gender identity. Thus we need gender-inclusive pronouns such as: they/them/theirs.

WAIT... there's more!

In addition to they/them/theirs, there are many other gender-inclusive pronouns out there! Here are a few that you might hear and how you pronounce them, however, we understand this is not a complete list.

SUBJECT	OBJECT	PRONOUN
she	her	hers
he	him	his
they	them	theirs
zie "zee"	zir "zer"	zirs "zers"
sie "see"	hir "here"	hirs "zers"
zie "zee"	zir "zer"	zirs "zers"

TIPS

- Introduce your pronouns when meeting someone for the first time.
**Putting yourself out there will allow others to feel comfortable to do the same.*
- Include pronouns on email signatures, nametags and meeting introductions.
**Incorporating inclusive language helps to create a culture of belonging.*
- Do not assume you know someone's gender identity and pronouns: if you have never met them - use they/them/theirs or inquire about pronouns. This is a simple way to show you want to cultivate an environment that respects all gender identities.
**Remember it is a privilege to not have to worry about what pronouns someone will use for you and not everyone shares that privilege.*
- You might be asking yourself "What if I make a mistake?". We all slip up sometimes. The best thing to do if you use the incorrect pronouns is to apologize and use the correct pronouns moving forward.
**Try not to make a big deal or bring extra attention to the situation.*

