# Pronouns for Peers

"The beginning of wisdom is to call things by their right name"
-Ancient Chinese Proverb

# Basic Gender Concepts

**Sexual Orientation:** an enduring pattern of romantic or sexual attraction to persons of the opposite sex or gender, the same sex or gender, to both sexes or to more than one gender. These attractions are generally subsumed under heterosexuality, homosexuality, and bisexuality

**Gender Identity:** Gender is concept (rather than a tangible, physical feature) that has been constructed by society. Gender identity is the personal sense of one's own gender. Gender identity can correlate with a person's assigned gender  at birth or it can differ from it.

**Gender Expression**

Gender expression, or gender presentation, is a person's behavior, mannerisms, interests, and appearance associated with gender in a particular cultural context, specifically with the categories of femininity or masculinity. This also includes gender roles. These categories often rely on stereotypes about gender.

**Transgender**
Transgender people have a gender identity or gender expression that differs from their gender assigned at birth. Some transgender people who desire medical assistance to transition from one sex to another identify as transsexual. Transgender, often shortened as trans, is also an umbrella term. In addition to including people whose gender identity is different from their assigned gender, it may include people who are not exclusively masculine or feminine. Other definitions of transgender also include people who have no gender at all.

**Cisgender**
Cisgender is a term for people whose gender identity matches their gender identity assigned at birth.

# What do you mean, transgender?  What???

Basically, anyone who is gender-diverse in any way can identify as transgender, or trans.

# Binary/Non-binary

Trans Femme (AMAB)

Trans Masc (AFAB)

# Intersex

## Umbrella Concepts-

Queer
Genderqueer
Gender-Nonconforming
Gender Questioning
Genderfluid
Gender Disobedient

**Pronouns: What and Why**

**WHAT ARE PERSONAL PRONOUNS AND WHY DO THEY MATTER?**
In English, whether we realize it or not, people frequently refer to us using pronouns when speaking about us. Often, when speaking of a singular human in the third person, these pronouns have a gender implied -- such as "he" to refer to a man/boy or "she" to refer to a woman/girl.
These associations are not always accurate or helpful.
Often, people make assumptions about the gender of another person based on the person's appearance or name. These assumptions aren't always correct.

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When we refer to "personal" pronouns, we don't mean that these pronouns
are necessarily private information (generally they are not), we mean
that they are pronouns referring to a unique and individual person.
Hopefully, you now have a fundamental understanding about why pronouns matter.

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What if someone else makes what you believe was a mistake?

## Sharing Your Pronouns

### HOW DO I SHARE MY PERSONAL PRONOUNS?
The vast majority of people go by the pronouns sets "he/him" or "she/her." A small but increasing number of people use "they/them" pronouns or another pronouns set -- sometimes simply because they don't want to go by pronouns with a gender association (just as some folks go by "Ms." whether or not they are married, because they don't think their marital status should be a relevant issue), and sometimes people use pronouns that aren't associated with one of those two most common (binary) genders because they are nonbinary (i.e. people who are neither exclusively a man nor exclusively a woman -- e.g. non-binary, genderqueer, or genderfluid.

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Please note that many nonbinary people identify with the word "trans" (short for "transgender"), but that some do not; and many people who are trans are also men or women (binary). All people, whether they are trans or not trans (cisgender), whether they are men or women or nonbinary -- all people can choose to go by whichever sets of pronouns they are most comfortable with.

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So, a great way to create and normalize space for people to share their pronouns is first to share your own. You can do this by saying, for example, "**Hi, my name is Farida and I go by the pronoun 'she'**" or "**I'm Yoshi and I'm referred to by 'he/him' pronouns**." Sharing your own pronouns is a great idea, but it isn't requisite.

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Asking Others Their Pronouns

## Inclusive Language
## HOW DO I USE GENDER INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE?
This reference is meant to provide you with very basic pointers and replacement language to help avoid gender assumptions in your language. Although you might not mean harm, using language that assumes another person's gender or pronouns (if that person has not shared the gender or pronouns to use) can cause harm, as can using language that erases some people's genders by implying there are only two genders (or that only a certain gender is qualified to do a particular job).

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Many people have already made the shift in their language to avoid "that's so gay" as a derogatory phrase or to avoid assumptions about sexual orientation (e.g. asking a woman if she has a boyfriend). Many people have stopped using "he" as a universal language to refer to all people, or to exclusive "he" language or "she" language to refer to all fire fighters, all flight attendants, all doctors, all nurses, all administrative assistants, all college students, etc. Similarly, we need to shift our language to avoid further assumptions that particularly harm transgender and gender nonconforming people. Small changes in language can make a big difference in peoples lives.

Instead of "ladies and gentlemen" or "boys and girls" or other language that assumes only two genders, you could use:

Friends
Colleagues
Friends and colleagues
Esteemed guests
Children / Youngsters
Students

Instead of "yes, sir" or "thank you, ma'am" or other language that makes gender-based assumptions, you could simply communicate:

Good morning!
Thank you very much.
It's a pleasure.
How can I be of assistance today?
Could I help the next guest?
Yes, please.
Yes, absolutely. Coming right up.

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# "You guys" vs. "Y'all"

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## Pronouns

| Pronoun | Normative (Subject) | Objective (Object) | Possessive determiner | Possessive pronoun | Reflexive |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| He | He laughed at the joke. | I called him on the phone. | His eyes are brown. | That backpack is his. | He likes himself. |
| She | She laughed at the joke. | I called her on the phone. | Her eyes are brown. | That backpack is hers. | She likes herself. |
| They | They laughed at the joke. | I called them on the phone. | Their eyes are brown. | That backpack is theirs. | They likes themselves. |
| Ze/hir (pronounced zee/here) | Ze laughed at the joke | I called hir on the phone. | Hir eyes are brown. | That backpack is hirs. | Ze likes hirself. |