

PRONOUNS



Using someone's **pronouns** is an important part of respecting their identity. It also can be a matter of physical and emotional safety. Transgender individuals may use a wide variety of pronouns. Here are some of them:

	Subject	Object	Pronoun	Pronunciation
Gender Binary	she	her	hers	as it looks
	he	him	his	as it looks
	they*	them*	their*	as it looks
Gender Neutral	ze	hir	hirs	zee, here, heres
	ze	zir	zirs	zee, zhere, zheres
	xe	xem	xyr	zee, zhem, zhere

*used as singular

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Language other than pronouns can also be gendered and can leave non-binary folks out.

Gendered Language	Inclusive Language
ladies and gentlemen	everyone
his/her	their
mailman/mailwoman	postal worker

Misgendering is using pronouns or other gendered language to refer to someone in a way that doesn't reflect their gender identity. Oftentimes, misgendering is experienced as invalidating and alienating. Misgendering can also contribute to gender dysphoria, which is anxiety, discomfort, and/or depression associated with one's assigned sex at birth.

PRONOUN TIPS



Ask: It might feel awkward at first, but asking someone their pronouns helps to prevent misgendering them later. When you introduce yourself to someone new, include your pronouns (i.e. "Hi, I'm Alex. I use he/him pronouns. What about you?"). This normalizes the use of gender inclusive language.

Don't Assume: You can't guess someone's gender identity or pronouns just by looking at them. It is best to ask but if you are unsure of someone's pronouns, using "they/them" is generally a good temporary solution.

Practice Makes Perfect: Practicing someone's pronouns makes it a more natural part of everyday language. A useful tip is putting a person's pronouns in your phone in their contact information.

Use people's pronouns even when they are not there

Correct others when they misgender someone: Something as simple as "Actually, Olivia uses the pronouns 'xe/hir'" can help change community climate.

Slip ups happen! While misgendering someone isn't good and can be uncomfortable for both parties, it does happen. Often, the best thing to do is to correct yourself with something simple like "Sorry, I meant 'she'" and then to move on with the conversation. Try not to call too much attention to the situation or apologize profusely — this puts the person who has been misgendered in the position of comforting you. It's best to say a quick apology and then move on, being more diligent in the future.

(Some of these tips are adapted from the University of Wisconsin: Milwaukee's LGBT Resource Center)

STEPS TOWARDS ALLYSHIP



Never 'out' someone: Transgender and GNC communities experience some of the highest rates of violence worldwide. We also can be disowned by family members or friends. While some trans folks are entirely open about being transgender ('out'), others are only out in certain environments. If you aren't sure how out someone is, be sure to ask them privately (including whether it is safe for you to use their name and pronouns in different settings).

Practice gender inclusive language: Things like including your pronouns in your email signature and beginning meetings or classes with people saying their name and pronouns create space for trans people to be open about the language that we use for ourselves.

Don't ask invasive questions: You would be surprised how often people feel comfortable asking trans folks very personal questions about what body parts we have, how we have sex, and what our "real" names are. While some trans folks are open to discussing their experiences, it should always be on their terms.

Promote trans safety: Transgender folks, especially trans women of color, experience extremely high rates of violence. Oftentimes, we are restricted from entering certain gendered spaces (i.e. bathrooms, locker rooms) or feel unsafe doing so. Support trans folks in accessing the facilities that they need.

Call out transphobic behavior: As a cisgender person, you have the benefit of being able to address transphobia without as much risk

Recognize that no two trans people are the same or have the same experience.

Educate yourself: Continue learning about transgender and GNC identities. Keep up on issues related to transgender justice and try to support or engage in related activism.

WHAT IS TRANSGENDER?



Transgender is an “umbrella” term for anyone who doesn’t identify with the sex and/or gender that they were assigned at birth. People who are not transgender (who identify with the sex and gender they were assigned at birth) are **cisgender**.

Being transgender is not the same as being **intersex** (although some people are both intersex and transgender). Intersex is a term “used for a variety of conditions in which a person is born with a reproductive or sexual anatomy that doesn’t seem to fit the typical definitions of female or male” (ISNA). For more information, please refer to our “Intersex Inclusivity and Steps Towards Allyship” pamphlet.



There is no one way to be transgender. A person does not have to have surgery or take hormones to be transgender, and it is never appropriate to ask people about what body parts they have.

Some trans identities are:

trans women: individuals whose assigned sex was male but who identify as women

trans men: individuals whose assigned sex was female but who identify as men

non-binary: individuals with a gender identity that doesn’t fit into either of the two traditional, binary gender categories (woman or man).

agender: individuals who do not have a gender or have a gender identity that is neutral

It is also important to recognize that these understandings of gender come from a Western lens and are not applicable to all groups of people. For example, **two-spirit** is a term used to describe various genders in North American indigenous communities.

Citations: isna.org; transstudent.org
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CHECK OUT THESE RESOURCES



“LGBTQ+ Definitions”
transstudent.org/definitions

The Gender Book
www.thegenderbook.com

“The Gender Unicorn”
transstudent.org/gender

Pronoun Practice Website www.minus18.org.au/pronouns-app/

“Transwhat? A Guide Towards Allyship”
www.transwhat.org/allyship

“6 Mistakes That Trans Allies Are Still Making”
<http://everydayfeminism.com/2015/06/6-common-mistakes-trans-allies/>



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Transgender Inclusivity and Steps Towards Allyship

This information resource was created to aid students, faculty, staff, and individuals of the broader community to better understand transgender and gender non-conforming (GNC) identities and to take steps towards active allyship. The aim of this resource is to foster intergroup dialogue on campus, in the workplace, and in the Tucson community.



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