



Dear
Professionals,

THINGS WE WANT YOU TO KNOW

A guide on using pronouns.



CHILYPEP

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S EMPOWERMENT PROJECT

WHAT ARE PRONOUNS?



Pronouns are the words you may like others to use for you in place of your proper name. Some examples include "she/her" or "he/him" or gender-neutral pronouns, such as or "they/them" or "it/its.

Here is an example of using "they/them" in a sentence: "John is substituting for me today and they are an incredible doctor."

Using singular "they" pronouns have been used in the English language for centuries. If you are still struggling with using this, remember, it takes practice!

A common misconception is that only people that are part of the LGBTQ+ community have pronouns or need to introduce them. This is not the case - everyone has pronouns!

MY PRONOUNS ARE

WHY ARE PRONOUNS IMPORTANT?



Pronouns are important because, by using a person's pronouns correctly, it role models a level of respect to others around you and helps form an inclusive environment.

Pronouns helps people feel secure in their identity which can help prevent gender dysphoria. Dysphoria can lead to other mental health issues such as depression, suicidal ideation and self harming behavior.

People who have discriminatory beliefs about the LGBTQ+ community use misgendering as a form of harassment so, by using the correct pronouns or going out of your way to ask - it shows to someone that you are a safe person that can be trusted.

Our pronouns are part of our identity. Just like our race, religion, and sexual orientation are ways in which we identify ourselves, our gender pronouns work in the same way. They reflect how we think of ourselves – and how others see us.

WHAT CAN I DO?



Make Your Support Visible!

Include "pronoun:" under "name:" in name tags and introductions in groups/ meetings as an opportunity for participants to make their pronouns visible. When you first meet someone, you could use a participant's last name instead of their first name in case they have not been able to change their name in your database or legally.

Simply ask them! or let them know that they can let you know what name they use if it is different than what is on the database or form.

Have pronouns added to all email signatures, and link the word "pronouns" to this guide or another reference for people who are new to this practice:

**"Sincerely,
Mx. Smith**



Pronouns: They, Them, Theirs"

WHAT IF I MAKE A MISTAKE?



Misgendering refers to the experience of being labeled by others as a gender other than one that a person identifies with. Because many (not all) associate their pronouns with their gender identity, using the wrong pronouns intentionally or unintentionally is a form of misgendering. If you accidentally use the wrong pronoun when identifying someone, please apologize or say “thank you”, and immediately use the right pronoun.

Everyone makes mistakes, please take accountability for your mistake and continue using the correct pronoun. The important thing to be mindful of, is to not unload your guilty feelings on transgender, nonbinary, and gender nonconforming people or expect forgiveness.

They might have a strong reaction to the misuse of their pronouns and need space to recenter themselves.



TOP TIPS!



- **Practice, practice, practice! Use gender-neutral pronouns such as “they” and “it” while visualizing the person who uses them. This is especially useful to do right before you’re about to see the person.**
- **When addressing groups of people or people whose pronouns you haven’t been told, use gender-neutral language such as, “siblings”, “students”, “friends,” “folks,” “all,” rather than “brothers and sisters,” or “guys,” “ladies,” “ma’am,” or “sir.”**
- **Use descriptive language if you do not know a person’s gender, pronouns, or name. e.g. Can you give this paper to the person across the room with the white t-shirt and short brown hair?**
- **Share this resource with others and open conversations and support to make sure you are engaging in respecting people’s identities and pronouns. Growing and learning takes time! Educate, engage, amend!**