

let's talk about **PRONOUNS**



what they are, why they matter and
what **to** do and what **not** to do.

WHAT IS GENDER?

at birth everyone is assigned a sex. it may be female, male or intersex depending on your biological sex organs. typically, by fault or lack of research, people tend to bring in chromosomes into the conversation also. this is an inaccurate way to determine biological sex as chromosomes come in a variation and not all humans can be placed in an xx and xy boxes.

societally, we tend to conflate sex with gender as we raise our kids in line with the societally developed understanding of gender roles, hence we are able to classify behaviours as 'manly' or 'girly'. this kind of behaviour is learnt and doesn't necessarily correlate with the person's gender. as such, people come out as transgender in order to exist more true to their identity, instead of acting in line with the way they were taught to behave.

WHAT ARE PRONOUNS?

a pronoun is something that use in discourse to refer to someone. we all have pronouns, and societally they are determined by biological sex. hence, biologically female individuals are referred to using she/her pronouns and biological males are referred to by he/him pronouns.

some people are comfortable with their assigned gender and fit into what is known as the '**binary genders**'. they are scientifically known as cisgender individuals.

transgender people may also be comfortable with the binary genders. some transition from one side of the binary to another.

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DOs and DON'Ts

DO: PUT YOUR PRONOUNS IN YOUR BIO ON SOCIAL MEDIA

we need to normalize the use of pronouns, regardless of whether you are cisgender, transgender, or gender non-conforming. by putting your pronouns in your social media bio (if it does not pose an imminent threat to you), you actively work to normalize the usage of pronouns in daily life, making it easier for those who are transgender and gender non-conforming (GNC) to be open about their identities.

DON'T: INTENTIONALLY MISGENDER PEOPLE

if you know that you are using the wrong pronouns for someone and still choose to do it, you are intentionally invalidating their identity. this is incredibly hurtful to people, and shows that you do not feel that their identity is invalid. affirming someone's identity is an issue of basic respect, and intentionally choosing not to do so (unless explicitly asked) is incredibly disrespectful and hurtful. this is especially true when this is done to a member of the trans/GNC community.

DO: ASK PEOPLE THEIR PRONOUNS

asking people their pronouns helps to show them that you care about affirming their identity. moreover, in large groups, asking for pronouns helps to create a safer environment for those who may identify as trans/GNC, as you provide them with the affirmation that they are free to be who they are.

DON'T: TREAT PRONOUNS LIKE A JOKE

although pronouns can often feel like an abstract concept, it's not ok to make jokes about them – especially those that mock individuals who use pronouns that don't fit with their sex/the gender binary. jokes such as "i identify as an attack helicopter" are incredibly harmful to the trans community as it creates the perception that gender identity is something chosen rather than intrinsic to our identities.

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DOs and DON'Ts (cont'd)

DO: INTRODUCE YOURSELF WITH YOUR PRONOUNS

like many of the other measures on this sheet, introducing yourself with your pronouns creates a safe environment for others to do the same. if you are able to take the first step, you send a message to others that you are an ally or someone who is respectful of pronouns. by doing this, we also normalize the usage of pronouns in daily life, creating safer environments for trans and gender nonconforming people.

DON'T: CALL THEM "PREFERRED" PRONOUNS

oftentimes, while well intentioned, the usage of the term "preferred pronouns" creates an idea that respecting someone's gender identity is respecting someone's "preference" rather than a basic bare minimum,.

AT THE END OF THE DAY,
**using the correct
pronouns for someone**
IS NOT AN ISSUE OF
"political correctness"
IT IS AN ISSUE OF
**BASIC
RESPECT.**

**additional
resource:**

mypronouns.org

is a great website that
elaborates on what
pronouns are + how to
use them!



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