Proper pronouns support a world of inclusion

4 ways to use them sensibly

We all have a gender identity, which is based on how a person identifies internally, as opposed to the sex they were assigned at birth. Some may identify as male. Some as female. Some both male and female. Alternatively, a person's *gender expression* is their outward appearance based on clothes, voice, mannerisms, and more.

Gender pronouns are words used to refer to people. Commonly used pronouns include she/her/hers, he/him/his, they/them/theirs, and Xe/Xem/Xyrs. Below are four ways to use them to help create a more inclusive space in the world around you.

Share your own pronouns: When introducing yourself, give your name, and which pronouns you go by. This makes it easier for others to share their pronouns as well. Make your pronouns visible in other ways by including them in your email signature, name tags, and social media profiles.

Create space for people to share their pronouns: Giving people the option to share what pronouns they use is a sign of respect. Some people may forgo pronouns, and simply ask that you use their given name. The key is to create a safe space for individuals to share.

Avoid making assumptions: Most people don't want us to draw conclusions about them based on appearances. Just because someone looks "feminine," does not mean that female is the gender they identify with. Additionally, someone's pronouns could change over time.

Be aware of language usage: Use gender neutral language when referring to groups; swap "Hey guys!" for "Hi everyone!" If you are part of a larger organization, encourage the use of gender inclusive language on various forms of paperwork.

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