

UNDERSTANDING PRONOUNS: DO'S & DON'TS

DO

Ask someone what pronouns they use when you meet them.

Drop the word "preferred." Just refer to someone's pronouns as the pronouns they use, or the correct pronouns.

Directly say the right pronouns (e.g., "she/her pronouns" "he/him pronouns" "they/them pronouns").

Accurately distinguish between pronouns (e.g., they/them, she/hers, he/him, etc.) and gender identity (e.g., nonbinary, gender fluid, female, etc.).

DON'T

Assume you know someone's pronouns based on the way they look.

Describe pronouns as "preferred." Pronouns are not a preference; they are very important to someone's identity. The only pronouns that should be used for someone are the pronouns that they request.

Describe pronouns as "female" or "male" pronouns. Pronouns do not have a gender, and this is confusing for others.

Use pronouns to describe someone's gender identity. Pronouns and gender identity are distinct concepts.

DID YOU KNOW?

As of 01/01/2019, California state law (SB 179) made nonbinary a legally recognized gender option, acknowledging it as an "umbrella term for people with gender identities that fall somewhere outside of the traditional conceptions of strictly either female or male."

EASY ACTIONS YOU CAN TAKE:

- Include pronouns on name tags.
- Include your pronouns in your email signature.
- Remember to ask about pronouns.
- Remind colleagues to use the correct pronouns for others.
- Avoid gender-specific language such as "you guys" or "ladies and gentlemen." Practice using inclusive language like "you all," "everyone," and "folks."

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

- A Quick and Easy Guide to They/Them Pronouns (Book)
Visit www.mypronouns.org
- Trans Student Educational Resources (TSER) Gender Grammar printable sheets
 - <https://transstudent.org/what-we-do/graphics/gendergrammar/>
 - <https://transstudent.org/what-we-do/graphics/pronouns101/>

