

PRONOUNS

At The Center, our mission is to celebrate everyone for who they are. We integrate pronouns into our everyday work to set a tone of respect for one another and create an affirming environment for the LGBTQ community members who call us home.

Why They Matter

Often used during introductions or while referencing someone during a conversation, pronouns help you know how someone would like to be addressed in any given situation.

Examples:

- he/him/his
- she/her/hers
- they/them/theirs
- ze/zir/zirs
- she/they or he/they
- Just my name please!



Pronouns & Gender Identity—Ask, Don't Assume!

Gender identity is our internal, individual experience of gender. It is directly linked to our sense of self and the sense of being male, female, both or neither.

While pronouns are pivotal to an individual's gender identity and how they relate to the world and others, it is important to keep in mind that a person's pronouns are not exclusively linked to gender and may not match your perception of that individual. Your assumption can leave a person feeling invalidated and dismissed. Taking the time to get to know a person better will help everyone feel more connected and respected.

Remember, mistakes happen and that's ok! Acknowledge your mistake the same as you would any other—recognize, apologize and move on.

When in doubt, use neutral pronouns (they/them) when referencing someone until you have a chance to ask. Like with anything worth doing, practice makes perfect and your efforts will be appreciated. This is how we operate at The Center, too: Until we can ask an individual or a group of people how they identify, we default to neutral language. This includes our communications in both English and Spanish. For Spanish, where almost every adjective, noun, and article are either grammatically masculine (with the letter O) or feminine (with the letter A), there are a wide variety of adaptations that can be used to convey gender neutrality. Our approach is to replace the O or the A with the letter E.

Here are a few ways you can be more inclusive and affirming when it comes to pronouns:

- Share your pronouns when introducing yourself. For example: "My name is Patrick and I use they/them pronouns."
- Include your pronouns in your email signature, on name tags at events, in your zoom name, and on your social media bio.
- When addressing groups of people or people whose pronouns have not been shared with you, use gender neutral language such as "elle" instead of "el" or "ella," "siblings," "students," "all" or "folks" rather than "brothers and sisters," "guys," "sir," etc...

Putting pronouns into practice shows your commitment to building an affirming space for all types of identities and experiences. We encourage you to use and share these tips.

Interested in learning more about LGBTQ inclusion and how to create a more affirming workplace? Check out The Center's [LGBTQ Workplace Inclusion Workshops](#).

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

[**LEARN ABOUT LGBTQ IDENTITIES**](#) ▶

[**LEARN ABOUT INTERSECTIONALITY**](#) ▶

[**LEARN ABOUT ALLYSHIP**](#) ▶

[**VISIT OUR RESOURCE CENTER**](#) ▶