Presentation Overview

- What are pronouns?
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- Sharing Pronouns: Best Practices
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- Can I ask for people's prefered pronouns?
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What are pronouns?

The term "pronouns" describes the words we use to refer to people when we are not using their name.

Ex: *"Sarah has written this guide on sharing pronouns, <u>she</u> hopes people find it useful."*

Most common* pronouns:

- she/her
- he/him
- they/them
- *there are many more less common ones which people might use

Pronouns ≠ gender identity

While the pronouns often have some relation to gender identity, pronouns themselves are not indicators of gender identity or the sex they were assigned at birth.

Ex: Someone who uses the pronouns he/him may be a man, but may also be non-binary.

Ex: Not all people who use the pronouns they/them are trans.

There are a lot of pronouns!*

*these are only some, of many, examples

	NOMINATIVE (SUBJECT)	OBJECTIVE (OBJECT)	POSSESSIVE DETERMINER	POSSESSIVE PRONOUN	REFLEXIVE
SHE	*She* knows	I ask *her*	*Her* lantern glows	That is *hers*	She likes *herself*
HE	*He* knows	I ask *him*	*His* lantern glows	That is *his*	He likes *himself*
THEY (OR EY)	*They* know	I ask *them*	*Their* lantern glows	That is *theirs*	They like *themself*
IT	*It* knows	I ask *it*	*Its* lantern glows	That is *its*	It likes *itself*
ZE (OR ZIE)*	*Ze* knows	I ask *zir*	*Zir* lantern glows	That is *zirs*	Ze likes *zirself*
SIE	*Sie* knows	I ask *sym*	*Syr* lantern glows	That is *syrs*	Ne likes *syrself*
CO	*Co* knows	I ask *cos*	*Cos* lantern glows	That is *cos*	Co likes *coself*
XE (OR XIE)*	*Xe* knows	I ask *xym*	*Xyr* lantern glows	That is *xyrs*	Xe likes *xyrself*
VE	*Ve* knows	I ask *ver*	*Vis* lantern glows	That is *vers*	Ve likes *verself*
KIT	*Kit* knows	I ask *kit*	*Kits* lantern glows	That is *kits*	Kit likes *kitself*

Be patient & practice!
If not in real life, then there are some great virtual tools like **this** & **this**.

Overview of terms

SEX (ASSIGNED AT BIRTH)

The sex (male or female) given to a child at birth, most often based on the child's external anatomy. This is also referred to as "assigned sex at birth."

TRANSGENDER

An umbrella term for people whose gender identity and/or expression is different from cultural expectations based on the sex they were assigned at birth. Being transgender does not imply any specific sexual orientation.

CISGENDER

A term used to describe a person whose gender identity aligns with those typically associated with the sex assigned to them at birth.

GENDER EXPRESSION

How a person behaves, appears, or presents themselves which may or may not conform to socially defined behaviors and characteristics typically associated with being either masculine or feminine.

SEXUAL ORIENTATION

A person's inherent or enduring emotional, romantic, sexual, & relational attraction to others.

NON-BINARY

An adjective describing a person who does not identify exclusively as a man or a woman. NB people may identify as being both a man and a woman, somewhere in between, or as falling completely outside the binary.

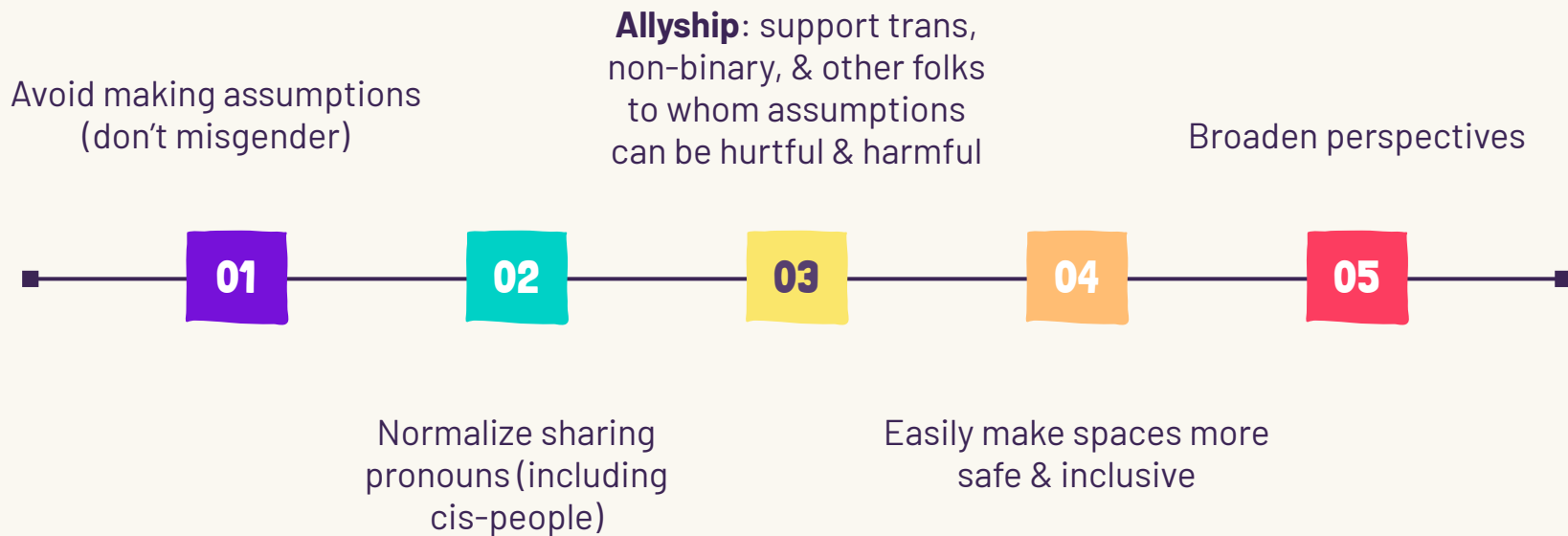# Why is sharing / asking pronouns important?

Introducing yourself with your pronouns as a cisgender person helps build a more inclusive and safe environment for trans & non-binary people to also share their pronouns. By normalizing this practice in your communities and workplaces, you lighten the pressure on trans & non-binary people.

—GLAAD

Why is sharing / asking pronouns important?

Avoid making assumptions (don't misgender)

Allyship: support trans, non-binary, & other folks to whom assumptions can be hurtful & harmful

Broaden perspectives

01 **02** **03** **04** **05**

Normalize sharing pronouns (including cis-people)

Easily make spaces more safe & inclusive

Sharing/Asking Pronouns: Best Practices

01

Incorporate doing so into your everyday life and thinking.

02

Avoid gendering people when referring to strangers or people whose pronouns you don't know.

03

Introduce yourself with your pronouns and ask others theirs.

04

Add your pronouns to your online identifications (ie. email signature, Zoom name, social media, etc)

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This work is happening on the unceded, occupied, ancestral and traditional lands of the xʷməθkwəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), and Səl̓ílwətaʔ/Selilwitulh (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations.

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Pronouns: she, her, hers

Announcing Global Citizen Academy for ambitious high school grads! Visit NBC to see how we're making 2020 a year on purpose.

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APPLICA

You will make mistakes.

(And that's ok)

At some point you will get someone's pronouns wrong. You likely already have. Cis-normativity is pervasive — and we all make mistakes.

Apologize, correct, check in

- Quickly apologize if you catch yourself making a mistake.

- If you know the wrong pronoun is being used for someone who isn't present, kindly insist on the correct usage.

- If the wrong pronoun is being used for someone who is present, let them determine the given moment, but consider checking in afterwards.

Move on

- No need to dwell on the mistake for a long time, this will only make everyone uncomfortable (especially the person who was misgendered)
- Some situations simply can't be interrupted. Let the moment pass and later consider how future scenarios could be improved by:
  - Ask the person who was misgendered how they would like to be supported in the future.
  - Discuss with your team/friends/etc who were present what could be done better next time.

Isn't it preferred pronouns?

Nope.

While this is usually said/asked with best intentions, there are 2 main reasons why this is bad practice:

Firstly, "preferred" implies that pronouns are simply something which is nice to get right, but not a necessity.

Secondly, the language of preference creates confusion for cisgender people who have never questioned that their assumed pronouns match their identity - not a bad thing, but can quickly derail a round of introductions!

PRIDE

Resources for further reading

- Human Rights Campaign Glossary
- Time Magazine: *Everything You Ever Wanted to Know About Gender-Neutral Pronouns*
- 'Asking for and Using Pronouns: Making Spaces More Gender Inclusive'
- 'Here's Why Gender Pronouns Are So Important'
- The University of Milwaukee's Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender Resource Center FAQs
- Pacific Standard: 'Why it makes sense for cis people to state their pronouns'
- 'Ask a Non-Binary' FAQs
- The Body is Not an Apology: "Pronoun Round Etiquette: How to Create Spaces That are More Inclusive"
- MIT's "Trans@MIT" resource page
- GLAAD Publications page
- List of Non-English gender neutral terms
- Using Pronouns Game!