



What Are Gender Pronouns?

A gender pronoun is the pronoun that a person uses for themselves.

For example: If Alex's pronouns are she, her, and hers, you could say "Alex ate her food because she was hungry."

Never refer to a person as "it" or "he-she". These are offensive slurs used against trans and gender non-conforming individuals.

How Do I Ask Someone What Pronouns They Use?

Try asking: "What pronouns do you use?" or "Can you remind me what pronouns you use?" It can feel awkward at first, but it is not half as awkward as making a hurtful assumption.

If you are asking as part of an introduction exercise and you want to quickly explain what gender pronouns are, you can try something like this: "Tell us your name, where you come from, and your pronouns. That means the pronouns that you use in reference to yourself. For example, I'm Xena, I'm from Amazon Island, and I like to be referred to with she, her, and hers pronouns. So you could say, 'she went to her car' if you were talking about me."

A One-Stop Clearinghouse for All Things Transgender

The Transgender Visibility & Education Network was designed to offer information, resources, and visibility for all things transgender. There are tons of websites out there which offer pieces of the puzzle, but TVEN – through our website, Facebook page, and TVEN Quarterly magazine – pulls all those resources together into one easy-to-find place and serves to offer information which caters to:

- Transgender & Gender Non-Conforming Individuals
- Family, Friends, Co-workers, and Allies
- Medical, Legal, Political, Business, and Community Organizations

Transgender Visibility & Education Network

Email: info@transgendervern.com

TransgenderVEN.com

Facebook: [@TransVENetwork](https://www.facebook.com/TransVENetwork)

Why Are Gender Pronouns So Important?



Gender Neutral / Gender Inclusive Pronouns

A gender neutral or gender inclusive pronoun is a pronoun which does not associate a gender with the individual who is being discussed.

Some languages, such as English, do not have a gender neutral or third gender pronoun available, and this has been criticized, since in many instances, writers, speakers, etc. use “he/his” when referring to a generic individual in the third person. Also, the dichotomy of “he and she” in English does not leave room for other gender identities, which is a source of frustration to the transgender and gender queer communities.

People who are limited by languages which do not include gender neutral pronouns have attempted to create them, in the interest of greater equality.

1	2	3	4	5
(f)ae	(f)aer	(f)aer	(f)aers	(f)aerself
e/ey	em	eir	eirs	eirself
he	him	his	his	himself
per	per	pers	pers	perself
she	her	her	hers	herself
they	them	their	theirs	themself
ve	ver	vis	vis	verself
xe	xem	xyr	xyrs	xemself
ze/zie	hir	hir	hirs	hirself

Note: the top line is meant to indicate two separate – but similarly spelled – sets of pronouns. They are ae/aer/aers and fae/faer/faers.

Pronouns-- A How To Guide

Subject: 1 laughed at the notion of a gender binary.

Object: They tried to convince 2 that asexuality does not exist.

Possessive: 3 favorite color is unknown.

Possessive Pronoun: The pronoun card is 4.

Reflexive: 1 think(s) highly of 5.

The pronoun list on the reverse is not an exhaustive list. It is good practice to ask which pronouns a person uses.

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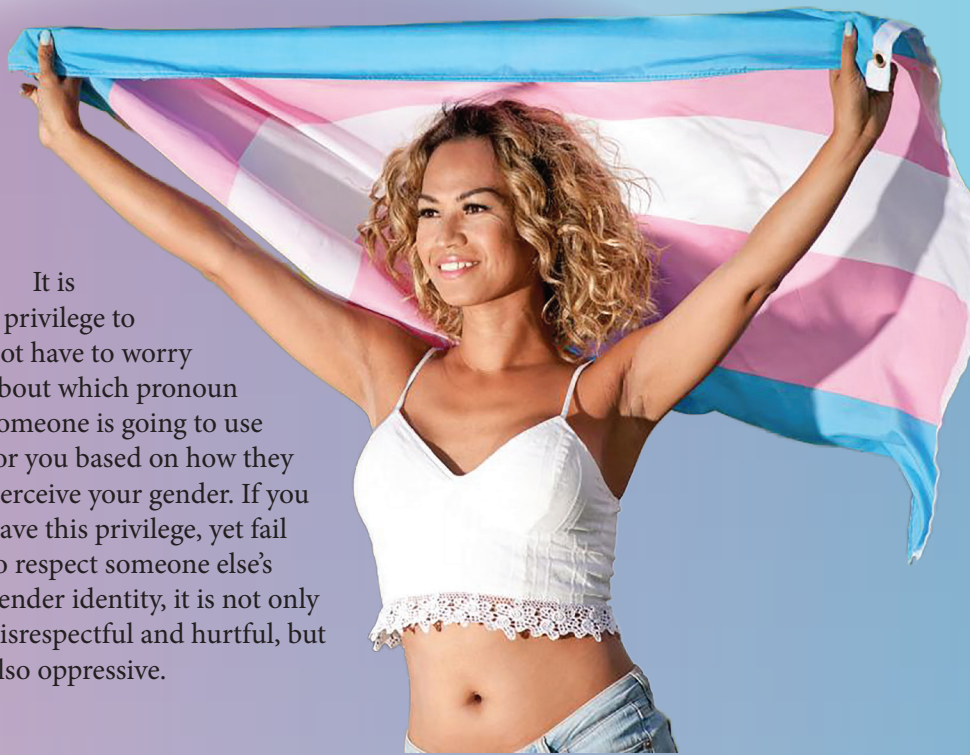


Why Is It Important To Respect People’s Pronouns?

You can’t always know what someone’s pronouns are by looking at them. Asking and correctly using someone’s pronouns is one of the most basic ways to show your respect for their gender identity.

When someone is referred to with the wrong pronoun, it can make them feel disrespected, invalidated, dismissed, alienated, or dysphoric (often all of the above.)

It is a privilege to not have to worry about which pronoun someone is going to use for you based on how they perceive your gender. If you have this privilege, yet fail to respect someone else’s gender identity, it is not only disrespectful and hurtful, but also oppressive.



What If I Make A Mistake?

It’s okay! Everyone slips up from time to time. The best thing to do if you use the wrong pronoun for someone is to say something right away, like “Sorry, I meant (insert pronoun)”

If you realize your mistake after the fact, apologize in private and move on.

A lot of the time it can be tempting to go on and on about how bad you feel that you messed up or how hard it is for you to get it right. Please don’t! It is inappropriate and makes the person who was misgendered feel awkward and responsible for comforting you, which is absolutely not their job.

Taking an active role in your classes, you may hear one of your students using the wrong pronoun for someone. In most cases, it is appropriate to gently correct them without further embarrassing the individual who has been misgendered. This means saying something like “Alex uses the pronoun she,” and then moving on. If other students or faculty are consistently using the wrong pronouns for someone, do not ignore it! It is important to let your student know that you are their ally.

It may be appropriate to approach them and say something like “I noticed that you were getting referred to with the wrong pronoun earlier, and I know that that can be really hurtful. Would you be okay with me taking them aside and reminding them about your pronouns?” Follow up if necessary, but take your cues from the comfort level of your student. Your actions will be greatly appreciated.