Gender Inclusive Language in English

Simple Version

Pao Inclusiveness Working Group

Gender-inclusive language acknowledges and respects **all** gender identities. It additionally promotes equality and helps reduce harmful biases and stereotypes.

- Use vocabulary inclusive of all genders when possible.

Avoid	Use
Chairman	Chair/Chairperson
Girls and boys	Students, etc.
Sisters and brothers	Siblings
{Boy, Girl}-friend	Loved one

In general, avoid making gender assumptions.

- Respect people's pronouns. Ask for pronouns if unsure. Include your own pronouns when introducing yourself.

The following is a table of common pronouns.

Association	Nominative	Accusative	Prenomial P.	Postnomial P.	Reflexive
Inclusive	They	Them	Their	Theirs	Themself
Feminine	She	Her	Her	Hers	Herself
Masculine	He	Him	His	His	Himself

Note that the "Association" column represents traditional gender association of the pronoun set. People who use particular pronouns may or may not fall into these traditionally-associated genders.

Specially, "they/them" is not a gender association, it may be used generically. The use of "they/them" when referring to a singular person is quite common in contemperory English.

When referring to a placeholder entity (e.g. "someone left their laptop here") or a person whose pronouns you do not know, either avoid pronouns altogether, or use gender-inclusive pronouns.

- The bottom line.

Do not use words that represent LGBTQIA+ identities, or for that matter, any word that represents a minority or other group, in insulting or derogatory ways. Saying that something is "gay" or "homosexual" to express hatred towards said entity shows profound disrespect for minorities that have been historically disadvantaged. The argument to "take this easy as these are just jokes" is ridiculous. The mere act of descriptive terms for a specific social group being used as a "joke" undermines the seriousness of the social issue—it is worth finding something else to joke about.