



Pronoun Usage Guide

How do I know what pronouns to use?

It is important to try your best not to assume which pronoun sets other people use because that can lead to *misgendering* (and you know the old saying about those who assume). The best way to find out someone's pronouns is to be straight-forward and ask; you can even break the ice and introduce your pronouns first! If you do not need to know the other person's gender (like for a cashier at a grocery store), you don't have to ask about their pronouns, but it is good practice to try and use gender neutral terms to go **#beyondthebinary**.

Example: *"Man! Did you see that server's hair? It was awesome! I wonder what kind of hair products they use to make it do that!"*

Which pronoun sets are common, and how do I use them?

He/Him/His	<i>He is cool.</i>	<i>I like him.</i>	<i>That's his.</i>	<i>He is himself.</i>
She/Her/Hers	<i>She is cool.</i>	<i>I like her.</i>	<i>That's hers.</i>	<i>She is herself.</i>
They/Them/Theirs	<i>They are cool.</i>	<i>I like them.</i>	<i>That's theirs.</i>	<i>They are themselves.</i>
Ze/Zie with Hir/Hirs [Z-ee] [Hee-r]	<i>Ze is cool.</i>	<i>I like hir.</i>	<i>That's hirs.</i>	<i>Ze is hirsself.</i>
Spivak (Ey/Em/Eirs)	<i>Ey is cool.</i>	<i>I like em.</i>	<i>That's eirs.</i>	<i>Ey is emself.</i>
Xe/Xir/Xirs [S-ee/S-ee-r/S-ee-rz]	<i>Xe is cool.</i>	<i>I like xem.</i>	<i>That's xirs.</i>	<i>That's xirs.</i>

Note: There are many other non-binary pronoun sets that exist!

What if I make a mistake?

The best thing that you can do is quickly apologize, correct yourself, and *move on*. This last step is especially important as dwelling makes the situation more awkward and can put pressure on the person you misgendered to play it off or apologize to make you feel better (which isn't cool). If you don't catch your mistake during the conversation, it helps to briefly apologize later as it shows that you care about the other person's gender and feelings!

The other important part about correcting mistakes is **practicing with the person's correct pronoun set(s)** so you can make less mistakes in the future! Progress is the ultimate way to show the trans/non-binary/genderqueer/genderfluid/etc. people in your life that you truly care about them!

How do I practice?

Method One: Practice using different pronouns sets while you are doing mundane things that don't take up all of your focus (like doing dishes or making the bed). This is important as you are essentially rewiring your brain's years of conditioning about gender norms!

Example: *"Nik is cool. I like them. They have many awesome qualities that I really like! Their hair is really cool and they are great at making pronoun guides and designing graphics!"*

Method Two: Find a partner to practice with! Have a lot of conversations using random names and randomly assigned pronoun sets so you can make using them feel more natural in a conversational setting.

Note: With both of these methods, *repetition is key!*

How/when should I correct others?

Correcting others is absolutely essential in queer-friendly spaces, even when a stranger or someone unfamiliar with pronouns misgenders someone. It is especially important to do so **even when the trans/gender-nonconforming person is not in the room**. These conversations can often be awkward or tough as you now have briefly teach *Gender Theory 101*, but they are essential in making trans and genderqueer folks feel safe and respected.

Do: Explain that someone uses a certain pronoun set and use the correct pronouns.
"Oh! Nik actually uses 'they/them' pronouns. But yeah, I think they are cool too!"

Don't: Just repeat the correct pronouns and expect the other person to catch on.
Most of the time, they won't.

Do not correct people if the trans/non-binary person in question has told you that they aren't out in that setting! How do you know? Often, you will be told, but it is also good to ask people if there are settings where they aren't out yet. Everyone deserves to go at their own pace and **personal safety is always paramount!**