

A Guide to Pronouns



What are pronouns?

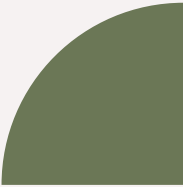
A pronoun is a word that we can use to refer to people in replacement of their names. Examples of pronouns include they/them/theirs, she/her/hers, he/him/his, and ze/zir/zirs, though there are many others.

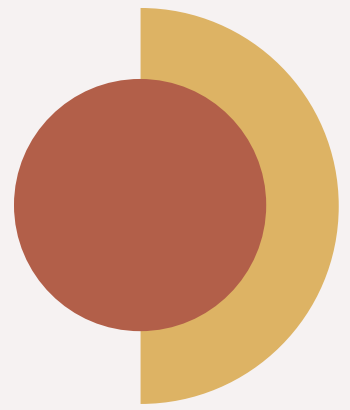
Why are pronouns important?

Each person has a different way of defining and expressing their gender identity. It is therefore impossible to know someone's pronouns based on how they express their gender identity, so someone's gender pronouns should never be assumed. Learning and applying a person's pronouns correctly is a way to respect a person's gender identity without making any assumptions.

How do I ask someone for their pronouns?

While it is becoming more common to ask people for their pronouns, it is also important to acknowledge that not everyone feels comfortable sharing their pronouns. Instead of asking someone to share their pronouns, it is therefore better to give people the option to provide you with their pronouns. When introducing yourself to someone, for example, you could say: "Hi, my name is _____, my pronouns are _____." This simple introduction can encourage someone else to provide you with their pronouns, should they feel comfortable with sharing them. In the case that someone does not feel comfortable sharing their gender pronouns, always use gender neutral pronouns, such as they/them/theirs.

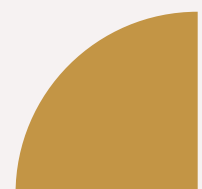




How to use pronouns correctly

The following chart indicates some ways of applying common pronouns in everyday conversation. Though non-exhaustive, this chart provides a general sense of how easy it is to plug in a pronoun in replacement of another in the same sentence.

	She/Her/Hers	He/Him/His	They/Them/Theirs	Ze/Zir/Zirs
Subject	She is running.	He is running.	They are running.	Ze is running.
Object	Her appointment is tomorrow.	His appointment is tomorrow.	Their appointment is tomorrow.	Zir appointment is tomorrow.
Possessive	The book is hers.	The book is his.	The book is theirs.	The book is zirs.
Reflexive	She looked at herself in the mirror.	He looked at himself in the mirror.	They looked at themselves in the mirror.	Ze looked at zirself in the mirror.





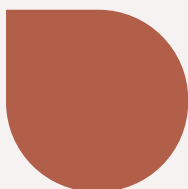
What do I do when I accidentally use the wrong pronouns when speaking with someone?

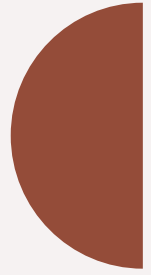
If you accidentally use the wrong pronouns with someone, that is okay—mistakes happen. Just make sure to apologize, correct yourself, and continue with the conversation. Drawing too much attention to your mistake can overburden them by making them feel the need to console you for your mistake. A simple apology and correction will do just fine.

What do I do if someone continuously uses wrong pronouns when speaking with me?

There are many options to take if you are continuously misgendered by the same person. We first encourage you to sit down and have a conversation with that person. Some people are not aware of how to use gender pronouns due to the rigid binaries that many of us grew up with. Having conversations can be a way to educate the other person, and can therefore be a way to avoid them misgendering others in the future.

However, if someone still continuously uses incorrect pronouns when speaking with or about you, or if you do not feel comfortable having a conversation with the other person, then you can come to the Title IX office for various services. The office can provide supportive measures such as classroom accommodations, provide you with campus and outside resources, conduct investigations, or simply maintain a file of your report for future reference. All you have to do is file a report, which can be done using [this form](#), or by calling 831-459-2462.





Are there any resources that I have access to in addition to the Title IX Office?

There are many other on and off campus resources in addition to the Title IX Office. Note that reporting to the Title IX Office is not a prerequisite for these resources. In other words, you have the option to choose whichever resource(s) work best for you! Below is a list of some resources. For a more comprehensive list, [visit this page](#).

- List of resources for [Trans and Non Binary Survivors](#) (with descriptions)
- Additional on-campus resources outside of the Title IX Office:
 - Cantu Queer Center (Note: The Cantu Queer Center has an obligation to report to the Title IX Office, but you may choose whether you want to continue working with the Title IX Office after a report has been made. Learn more [here](#).)
 - queer.ucsc.edu
 - Counseling and Psychological Services, also known as CAPS (confidential resource)
 - caps.ucsc.edu/counseling/lgbtq-counseling-services.html
 - Campus Advocacy Resources and Education, also known as CARE (confidential resource)
 - care.ucsc.edu
- Additional off-campus resources:
 - Monarch Services (confidential resource)
 - www.monarchsc.org
 - Walnut Ave Family and Women's Center (confidential resource)
 - www.wafwc.org





Do's and Don'ts

DO respect people's decision to share or conceal their gender identity or pronouns.

DO NOT "out" someone's gender identity or pronouns without their permission.

DO respect people's boundaries when discussing their identity.

DO NOT ask anyone about personal matters, such as their "real name," their genitals, or surgical status.

DO support gender neutral restrooms. Individuals may use whichever bathroom aligns with their gender identity.

DO NOT question, shame, or judge others for using the restroom of their choice.

DO identify unknown people using gender-neutral terms, such as "the person in blue" rather than the "woman in blue."

DO NOT assume people's gender identity based on how they present themselves.

DO treat others with respect. Help create an environment where everyone feels safe.

DO NOT refer to people using slurs, or tolerate others using slurs.

