



10 Tips about Using Pronouns

1. **Normalize Pronouns** - A great way to do this is including your pronouns in email signatures or on social media bios. This helps to normalize the idea that people shouldn't just assume they can tell someone's pronoun based on the traditional gendering of a name.
2. **Ask** - Ask everyone their pronouns, not just the person you think might be trans or non-binary. Make asking pronouns as natural as asking what someone's name is when you meet.
3. **Effort** - The only way to get better at using non-binary pronouns is to step outside of your comfort zones. Forget what you think you know about grammar, and make an effort to respect our identities by using non-binary pronouns.
4. **Practice**- A rainbow of gender-neutral pronouns have been part of my regular spoken and written vocabulary for sixteen years. Using them is as natural to me as binary pronouns, but that didn't happen overnight. The only way to not get flustered using non-binary pronouns is to practice, practice, practice!
5. **Don't assume**- You can't tell a person's gender identity or pronouns based on how they look. Gender expression isn't the same as gender identity, and neither expression nor identity are an indicator of what pronouns someone uses. The only way to know what someone's pronouns are is to ask. Also, don't assume that someone's pronouns are fixed. Gender is fluid, and their pronouns may (or may not) change over time.
6. **Include pronouns**- Include pronouns in your ice breakers/go-arounds when you start a meeting. Are you involved with organizing a conference? Include a place for pronouns on your name tags/badges. You can even buy pre-made pronoun stickers
7. **Apologize**- Mistakes happen. When you misgender someone say you are sorry, and fix your language moving forward. Don't make a huge deal about your mistake and force the trans/non-binary/genderqueer person spend a lot of time and energy consoling you for misgendering them. The best apology is not doing it again.
8. **Non-binary greetings**: Instead of saying "ladies" or "guys" to a group of people try to incorporate language that isn't gendered like "folks," "y'all," "friends" etc. into your vocabulary
9. **Correct** - When you hear someone use the wrong pronouns for a mutual friend correct them. Sadly, sometimes the only way to get people to respect non-binary pronouns is if they feel socially shamed into doing so. Part of being a good ally to non-binary, genderqueer, and trans people in your community is helping other people get our pronouns right.
10. **One size doesn't fit all** - As people become more comfortable and familiar with using the non-binary pronoun "they" I've noticed a trend that people will use it as a default pronoun for any non-binary person. "They" is an awesome pronoun, but it's not mine. I feel just as misgendered by people referring to me as "they" as I do when they use "he" or "she."