

Pronouns 101

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Commonly Used Pronouns: A Primer

She/Her/Hers

He/Him/His

They/Them/Theirs

Combination of Pronouns

Ze/Zem/Zyrs (Zhee, Zhem, Zheres)

No Pronouns-Use My Name

Any Pronouns

Introductions

In Pairs:

- **Name**
- **Pronouns**
- **Class Year**
- **Volunteer Role**
- **Answer the Question:** What are you most excited about in serving in this volunteer role?

What are Pronouns?

When do we learn them?

A word that can function by itself as a noun phrase and that refers either to the participants (e.g., *I, you*) or to someone or something mentioned elsewhere (e.g., *she, it, this*)

Generally, **toddlers learn** subjective **pronouns** before objective ones. By 36 months, **toddlers** have mastered most **pronouns**. During the 13 to 24 month period, **toddlers** may have used the **pronouns** I and it.

Getting Intentional about Pronouns...

Why are they important?

People associate expression with identity and as we as a culture re-expand our understandings of gender we also need to create space for our assumptions and this association to be wrong.

Sharing and asking pronouns helps to break this assumption.

Name/Pronouns DO NOT indicate anything about a person's gender or other identities.

A collage of five trans students' faces, each in a separate vertical panel. The students are diverse in appearance and expression. The text is overlaid in the center, reading "TRANS STUDENTS EXPLAIN WHY PRONOUNS ARE IMPORTANT".

**TRANS STUDENTS
EXPLAIN WHY
PRONOUNS
ARE IMPORTANT**

Asking & Sharing

How do we do it?

Activity: Write down how you will introduce pronouns in new settings

When Preparing for Events/Meetings

- **Good Practice:** if you are making/need name tags you should also be thinking about pronouns.
- Like names, helpful to do the first few meeting times

What do we do? When we make mistakes..

If you (just) made a mistake:

- Fix it, then continue
 - Don't make it a big deal or draw a lot of attention to it.
 - Avoid making the situation about you and your intent

Didn't catch it right away:

- I'm really sorry I used the wrong pronouns for you earlier. I know you go by 'they/them' and I will make sure I get it right next time

Correcting Others Mistakes

Importance of
knowing what they
want.

When we don't know:

- Simply reply to the statement using what you understand to be the correct pronouns
 - Thanks! **THEY** are at work right now

In large groups/after intros with pronouns:

- “XXX earlier mentioned they go by ‘they’ pronouns. I know for a lot of folks in this room these concepts about pronouns may seem new but it’s important that we work on this to get it right for folks

Dealing with Pushback

Types of Pushback

- [Singular They](#)
- Unnecessary: We already Know
- Transphobia-only 2 genders
- We don't state other identities
- It's too hard to remember/do

Reflection: How will you deal with pushback?

Create short responses to how you would handle the different types of pushback.

Macalester Statement of Purpose and Belief

We affirm the importance of the intellectual growth of the students, staff and faculty through individual and collaborative endeavor. **We believe that this can best be achieved through an environment that** values the diverse cultures of our world and recognizes our responsibility to **provide a supportive and respectful environment for students, staff and faculty** of all cultures and backgrounds.

Values of multiculturalism, internationalism, scholarship, and service to society.

Questions?

**Please email if you have additional questions, need resources, or want to check-in about something.
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