**Tips for Pronouns**

**LISTEN**
How does the individual refer to themselves?

**ASK**
If you are unsure of which pronouns to use, you may want to ask.

**UNDERSTAND**
A person’s pronouns can change, the preferred pronouns from yesterday will still apply today.

**CLARIFY**
If you are unsure of the conjugation of a particular set of pronouns, you may want to ask.

**RESPECT**
If a person has shared their pronouns with you, it is best practice to use them and refer to them by their stated pronouns, even if they are not present.

Information gathered from
University of Wisconsin-Madison
Division of Student Life

This pamphlet is made available to members of the campus community who are interested in learning more about various aspects of LGBTQ identities and experiences. The content contained within the pamphlet is not reflective of University policy.
Some people don’t feel like traditional gender pronouns (she/her, he/him) fit their gender identities. Transgender, genderqueer, and other gender-variant people may choose different pronouns for themselves. The following guide is a starting point for using pronouns respectfully.

**How do I know which pronouns to use?**
If the person you’re referring to is a stranger or brief acquaintance (like a server, cashier, fellow bus patron, etc), you may not need to know. If the person is a classmate, student, or coworker, for example, it may be best to ask. You may try:

- “What pronouns do you use?”
- “How would you like me to refer to you?”
- “How would you like to be addressed?”
- “My name is Tou and my pronouns are he and him. What about you?”

**How often do pronouns change?**
Remember that people may change their pronouns without changing their name, appearance, or gender identity. Try making pronouns an optional part of introductions or check-ins at meetings or in class.

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### Gender Neutral Pronouns

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pronoun</th>
<th>Normative (subject)</th>
<th>Objective (object)</th>
<th>Possessive determiner</th>
<th>Possessive Pronoun</th>
<th>Reflexive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>He</td>
<td>He laughed</td>
<td>I called him</td>
<td>His eyes gleam</td>
<td>That is his</td>
<td>He likes himself</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>She</td>
<td>She laughed</td>
<td>I called her</td>
<td>Her eyes gleam</td>
<td>That is hers</td>
<td>She likes herself</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They</td>
<td>They laughed</td>
<td>I called them</td>
<td>Their eyes gleam</td>
<td>That is theirs</td>
<td>They like themselves</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ne</td>
<td>Ne laughed</td>
<td>I called nem</td>
<td>Nir eyes gleam</td>
<td>That is nirs</td>
<td>Ne likes nemself</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ve</td>
<td>Ve laughed</td>
<td>I called ver</td>
<td>Vis eyes gleam</td>
<td>That is vis</td>
<td>Ve likes verself</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ey</td>
<td>Ey laughed</td>
<td>I called em</td>
<td>Eir eyes gleam</td>
<td>That is eirs</td>
<td>Ey likes emself</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ze/Hir</td>
<td>Ze laughed</td>
<td>I called hir</td>
<td>Hir eyes gleam</td>
<td>That is hirs</td>
<td>Ze likes himself</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ze/Zir</td>
<td>Zie laughed</td>
<td>I called zir</td>
<td>Zir eyes gleam</td>
<td>That is zirs</td>
<td>Zie likes zirself</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Xe</td>
<td>Xe laughed</td>
<td>I called xem</td>
<td>Xyr eyes gleam</td>
<td>That is xyrs</td>
<td>Xe likes xemself</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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### What if I make a mistake?
Most people appreciate a quick apology and correction at the time of the mistake. Try:

- “Her books are—I’m sorry, hir books are over there.”

By correcting yourself, you’re modeling respectful pronoun use for others in the conversation. If you only realize the mistake later, a brief apology can help. Try:

- “I’m sorry I used the wrong pronoun earlier. I’ll be more careful next time.”

### When should I correct others?
Some people may not want a lot of public attention to their pronouns, while others will appreciate you standing up for them. If someone uses the wrong pronoun for a person who isn’t present, try a brief correction:

- “I think Sam uses she and her pronouns. And yes, I’m going to her house later too!”

It can be tough to remember pronouns at first. The best solution is to practice! Correct pronoun use is an easy step toward showing respect for people of every gender.