Using someone’s correct personal pronouns is a way to respect them, acknowledge and affirm gender and identity, and create an inclusive and professional environment.

**COMMON PRONOUNS**

**she/her**
EXAMPLE: “I saw Carla today and she was really happy. I asked her why and she told me she got a new puppy.”

**he/him**
EXAMPLE: “I saw Kenji today and he was really happy. I asked him why and he told me he got tickets to see his favorite musician.”

**they/them**
EXAMPLE: “I saw Johna today and they seemed really happy. I asked them why and they told me their friends were visiting from Mexico.”

Singular “they” is also useful to talk about a hypothetical person or one whose gender you don’t know. It has been in use for centuries, and many style guides, like the Associated Press Stylebook, include this usage. Learn more about the history of “they” in the Suggested Reading section.

- If a student arrives late, they may need to find a space in the back of the room.
- One professor objected, but they were overruled.

**NEOPRONOUNS**

Neopronouns are a category of new (neo) pronouns that are used instead of “she,” “he” or “they” when referring to a person. While less common, neopronouns are not new; the first recorded English neopronoun appeared in 1841. They have long served as a way for individuals to express, recognize and acknowledge unique aspects of their gender identity or expression to others. Neopronouns can be used by anyone, but most often they are used by transgender, non-binary and/or gender nonconforming people.

*Note: This is not a comprehensive list of neopronouns. Language is always evolving, and many neopronouns have ties to specific cultures (elle/elles, xier/xies).*

ze or sie [pronounced “zee”] / hir
xe [pronounced “zee”] / xyr
zie [pronounced “zee”] / zir
fae [pronounced “fay”] / faer/faers and fae/fem/faer
e [pronounced “eh”] / em

EXAMPLE: “I saw Hayden today and ze was really happy. I asked hir why and ze told me hir vegetable garden was doing really well.”
MULTIPLE PRONOUN SETS
Some people use more than one set of pronouns. Multiple pronoun sets are commonly written as follows:

she/they (uses both she/her and they/them pronouns)
he/xe (uses both he/him and xe/xem pronouns)
they/ze/she (uses they/them, ze/hir and she/her pronouns)

Often, the order of the pronouns indicates which one is preferred; for example, “she/they” can mean that the person mainly uses “she” but also uses “they.” Other people use multiple pronouns interchangeably with no preference. If you're unsure, ask!

Some pronouns may be used situationally (socially vs. professionally, for example), or the individual may prefer to use one set most of the time.

EXAMPLE: Quinn (she/they), uses she/her and they/them pronouns interchangeably
“I saw Quinn today and they were really happy. I asked her why and she told me she just had the best boba tea from the new cafe.”

EXAMPLE: Sadira (per/he), prefers per/per in this context
“I saw Sadira today and per was really happy. I asked per why and per told me per visited per grandparent last weekend.”

GENDER TERMINOLOGY
Gender describes our internal understanding and experience of our own gender identity. Each person's experience of their gender identity is unique and personal. You can't know someone's gender just by looking at them.

- **Cisgender:** People whose gender identity aligns with the sex they were assigned at birth.
- **Transgender:** People whose gender identity differs from the sex they were assigned at birth.
- **Nonbinary:** An umbrella term for people whose gender identity differs from the sex they were assigned at birth and who experience their gender identity and/or gender expression as outside of the male-female gender binary.
- **Two-Spirit:** A term created by (and exclusively for) First Nations/Native American/Indigenous peoples whose sexual orientation, gender and/or sex exists in ways that challenge colonial ideas of a gender binary.

GENDER AND PRONOUNS
Just as you can't assume someone's gender identity by their appearance, you can't assume someone's pronouns by their appearance or their stated identity. Pronouns are personal. They can change over time or depend on the situation.

Using the correct pronouns for someone does not require knowledge of their sex, gender identity, acknowledgment of their gender expression or any other variables. To avoid misgendering someone, share your pronouns and ask for theirs! You can learn more about gender and pronouns in the suggested reading section.
**MISGENDERING**

To **misgender** someone means to use the wrong name, pronouns or form of address (Mr., Ms., Mx., etc.). Even when it's an accident, misgendering is hurtful and could even put someone in danger if they are outed in an unsafe environment.

If you misgender someone, correct yourself and apologize, but don't call more attention to the mistake. Show that you care by learning and practicing their correct pronouns, so it becomes second nature.

And if you see someone being harassed for their gender or being intentionally misgendered, [here's how you can help.](#)

**HOW TO SHARE PRONOUNS**

A great way to create and normalize space for people to share their pronouns is to start by sharing your own. You can do this by saying, for example, “I’m Amir and I use ‘he/him’ pronouns.” Some people also choose to wear pins or badges that display their pronouns.

1. **SHARE.** Don't force people to share their pronouns, but you can invite or encourage people to share. If you are a leader in a group setting, start a round of introductions by sharing your own pronouns. Or try adding pronouns to email signatures and nametags.

2. **ASK.** You can't tell someone’s name or pronouns just by looking at them. If you're not sure, ask them, “What pronouns do you use?”

3. **PRACTICE.** If someone takes the time to let you know their pronouns, use them and respect them. Ask coworkers, peers and friends to point out when you've made a mistake. If you do make a mistake, correct yourself and apologize.

**USE GENDER-NEUTRAL LANGUAGE**

Inclusive language celebrates differences and fosters inclusivity. Many terms that we use frequently are gendered and biased. Instead, try to use gender-neutral language that doesn't make assumptions.

- freshman > first-year student
- you guys > you all, folks, everyone
- ladies and gentleman > friends and guests
- alumna/alumnus > alum
- alumni/alumnae > graduates

**EXAMPLE EMAIL SIGNATURE/ BUSINESS CARD LISTING**

Anika Singh
UW Medicine Advancement
Box 358045, Seattle, WA 98195-8045
Street address: 850 Republican Street, C-5, Seattle
Phone: 206.221.0838, Fax: 206.685.9889
email@uw.edu
give.uwmedicine.org
pronouns: she, her, hers
HOW YOU CAN TAKE ACTION

So how can you use pronouns to create an inclusive, welcoming professional environment? Here are some next steps you can take.

• **Include your pronouns in your Zoom settings.** In the settings menu, choose My Profile. At the top of the page, you can edit your name and pronouns and choose when you would like your pronouns to be shared.

• **Make pronouns part of your introductions.** When you're doing introductions in a meeting, interview or gathering, say your name and the pronouns you use. This sets an example and creates space for others to share their pronouns, too.

• **Add your pronouns to your email signatures, business cards and nametags.** You can edit your email signature to include a pronoun line. UW Medicine business cards include the option to list your pronouns, and nametag stickers with pronouns are available to add to your nametag for events.

• **Set your pronouns in Identity.UW.** You can now display your pronouns in UW systems such as MyUW, Zoom, Canvas and MyUW class lists when you click “Set pronouns” in Identity.UW. (NetID required)

• **Include your pronouns in your online bio.** You can add your pronouns to your contact information on the Contact Us page.

• **Listen for people's pronouns — and use them.** If someone takes the time to let you know their pronouns, use them and respect them. Ask coworkers, peers and friends to point out when you've made a mistake. If you do make a mistake, correct yourself and apologize.

• **Learn more.** The Suggested Reading page has links to articles, glossaries, UW policies and links to harassment and bystander intervention training.
**SUGGESTED READING**

This guide is meant as a basic introduction to pronouns and gender, but there's much more to learn. If you'd like to read more, here are some suggestions.

**BEYOND THEY/THEM: WHAT ARE NEOPRONOUNS?**
[www.rollingstone.com/culture/culture-features/neopronouns-they-them-pronoun-alternative-1190069/](http://www.rollingstone.com/culture/culture-features/neopronouns-they-them-pronoun-alternative-1190069/)

**GENDER, GENDER EXPRESSION, AND PRONOUNS 101 (THE TREVOR PROJECT)**

**GLOSSARY OF TERMS: TRANSGENDER (GLAAD)**

**THE LOST GENDER-NEUTRAL PRONOUN (MERRIAM-WEBSTER)**

**PRONOUNS 101 (HUMAN RIGHTS CAMPAIGN)**

**PRONOUN USAGE SURVEY (THE TREVOR PROJECT)**

**TRANSGENDER AND GENDER NON–BINARY (TGNB) COMMON TERMS (REQUIRES NETID)**

**UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON’S INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE GUIDE**

**UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON Q CENTER RESOURCE REPOSITORY**

**UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON TITLE IX TRAINING (HARASSMENT AND BYSTANDER INTERVENTION)**
[https://tixemployee.uw.edu/](http://https://tixemployee.uw.edu/)

**WHY DO PEOPLE USE MULTIPLE PRONOUNS?**
[www.them.us/story/multiple-sets-of-pronouns](http://www.them.us/story/multiple-sets-of-pronouns)