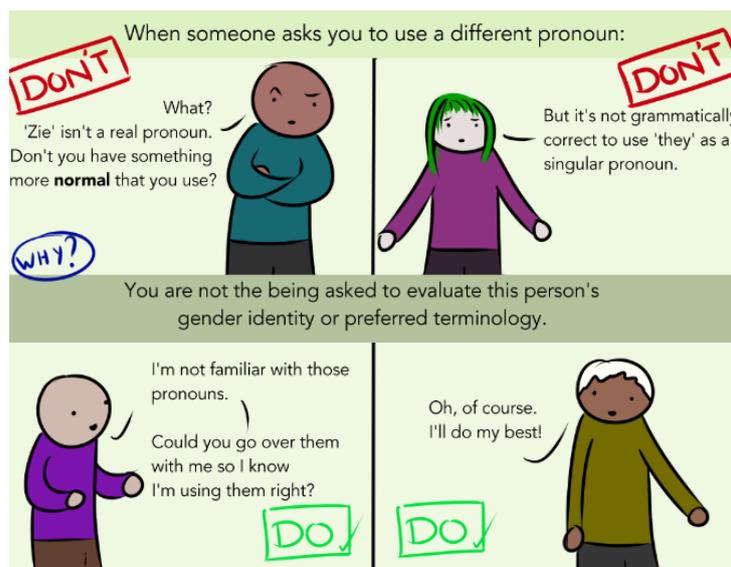


Personal Gender Pronouns (PGP)

What is a personal gender pronoun (PGP)?

A PGP is the pronoun a person uses for themselves. They can be gender-specific (also known as binary) - he, she, hers, his; or **gender-neutral** - **them, they, theirs**.

Others may chose to use gender neutral pronouns other than 'them, they, theirs'. Common examples of these pronouns would be zie, hir and xe, but some individuals prefer others so be sure to clarify these with them. Some people prefer not to use pronouns at all and use their name as a pronoun instead (e.g. Anna ate Anna's food because Anna was hungry).



Why are PGPs important?

The use of neutral PGPs is becoming more wide spread. It is not always possible to know what someone's PGP is by their outward appearance or gender presentation. Often we assign gender-specific pronouns "he" or "she" to those around us, but many people have a gender expression that is neither male nor female; it may be fluid, neutral or they may identify their gender in a different way.

Using neutral PGPs ensures that everyone is involved in a conversation regardless of their identity.

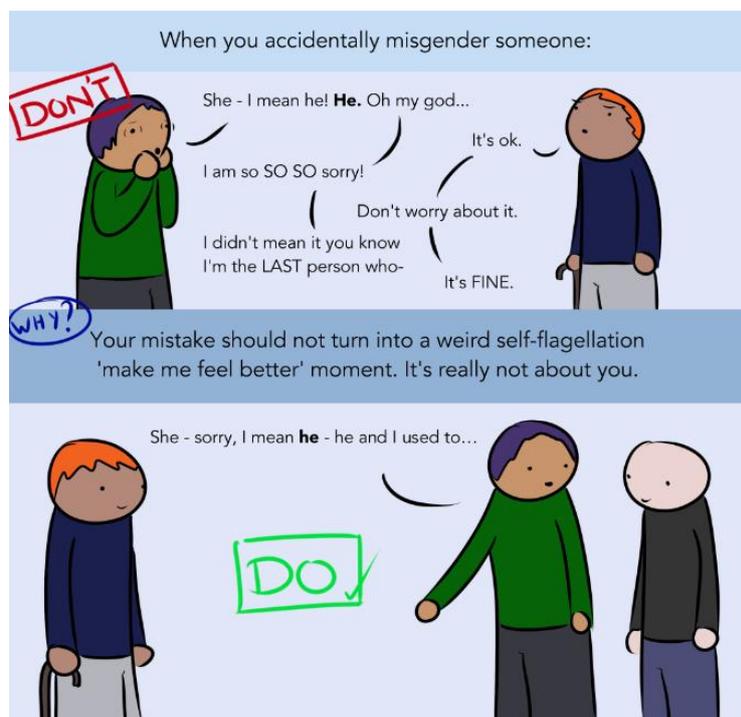
Asking and correctly using someone's personal pronoun is one of the most basic ways to show your respect for their gender identity. When someone is referred to with wrong pronoun, it is known as mis-gendering and can be offensive and hurtful to the individual who has been mis-gendered.

How to use PGPs:

- If a **visitor on a UCAS day** asks where the toilets are offer both options: "all toilets are behind Reception" rather than "the ladies toilets are on the left behind Reception".
- If you are in any form of leadership position (e.g. tutor group supervisor) you could consider asking members of a group to **share their preferred pronouns** when you first meet, and share yours. For example "My name is Tom and my pronouns are they, them, theirs" This has been introduced as standard practice in several YUSU committees at York already.
- If you do not know someone's PGPs and you are **writing an email** to them (e.g. about them visiting next week) or about them (e.g. arranging an access card for their arrival) use the gender-neutral 'them, their, they'.

What if I make a mistake?

It's okay! Everyone makes mistakes from time to time. The best thing to do if you use the wrong pronoun is to correct yourself straight away. If you realise your mistake afterwards, apologise in private and move on. It can be tempting to say how bad you feel that you made a mistake, but this can make the person who was mis-gendered feel awkward and responsible for comforting you, which is not appropriate.



What if someone else makes a mistake?

If you hear others using the wrong pronoun for someone, it is appropriate (in most cases) to gently correct them without further embarrassing the individual who has been mis-gendered. This means saying something like "Actually, Sam uses the pronoun he," and then moving on.

If other people are consistently using the wrong pronouns for someone, it is important that you do not ignore it. It may be appropriate to approach the mis-gendered person and say something such as "I noticed that you were getting referred to with the wrong pronoun earlier, and I know that that can be really hurtful. Would you be okay with me taking them aside and reminding them about your personal pronoun?" You should take your cues from the comfort level of the person who has been mis-gendered.

Adapted from <https://uwm.edu/lgbtrc/support/gender-pronouns/>

Sources: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/magazine-34901704>

Images: <http://www.robot-hugs.com/pronoun-etiquette>

Department of Chemistry 2017

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