

Pronouns: A Brief Guide to Inclusive Communication and Understanding

Q1. Why are pronouns important?

Pronouns are essential in the way we communicate with one another. It's not only about English grammar. In English, the third person pronouns also convey individuals' gender. We use pronouns as a way to identify or refer to someone.

There are many pronouns. A person's set/sets of pronouns are not indicative of their gender. By assuming that people with she/her/hers pronouns are cis-women and he/him/his pronouns are cis-men - we propagate the belief that looking a certain way demonstrates the gender they are or not are. By using people's correct pronouns, we create an inclusive environment.

Therefore, knowing and using a person's correct pronouns fosters inclusion and makes them feel valued and respected. And it also affirms their gender identity/expression.

Q2. What do we need to know about pronouns?

- ⌘ Pronouns may or may not refer to someone's gender identity.
- ⌘ Pronouns can be changed, and it is absolutely okay to change your pronouns!
- ⌘ It's also ok if someone does not have pronouns, you can refer to them using their name.
- ⌘ People can have multiple pronouns. For example - my pronouns are "she" and "they".
- ⌘ So next time, before making an assumption about someone's pronouns, let's just ask!

Q3. Why should we talk about our pronouns?

- ⌘ By doing this, we work towards normalising the use of pronouns
- ⌘ Take the burden off individuals who do not use the "traditional" pronouns
- ⌘ Promotes awareness of trans, transgender, genderqueer, and gender non-conforming communities
- ⌘ Reduces anxiety for those who use non-binary pronouns or who are often misgendered.

Q4. Why might someone choose not to use pronouns?

- ⌘ People may not be comfortable sharing their pronouns with everyone
- ⌘ They may choose to use their correct pronouns only in places they feel safe to do so
- ⌘ They may want to be called by their names

Some friendly tips when you're learning to use pronouns:

- ⌘ When in doubt, it is always okay to ask somebody about their pronouns by asking: what pronouns do you use? Or how should I refer to you?
- ⌘ If ever you are unsure of someone's pronouns, use the default "they" and "them" pronouns.