

Pronoun Usage 101

A resource provided by the Johns Hopkins LGBTQ Allies Faculty/Staff Collective

What are pronouns?

Pronouns are how we refer to each other in the third person. You cannot guess someone's gender or pronouns by their appearance.

Gender neutral pronouns

Gender neutral pronouns can be used to refer to people without specifying a gender (e.g. they, them, this person, everyone).

She/her/hers: She took her friend to the store. She bought herself a new outfit.
He/him/his: He likes to go to the beach and have himself an ice cream.
Ze/hir/hirs: Ze will be at work today. I want to ask hir if ze bought himself a new car.

Using pronouns

Respect

If someone lets you know their pronouns, use them – even when the person is not present. If you accidentally use the wrong pronoun, apologize and correct yourself.

Start meetings with introductions that allow people to share pronouns.

Include pronouns on email signature lines and name tags.

Share

Practice

If you are not sure of someone's pronouns, pay attention to how others refer to them. If it is still unclear, ask the person privately which pronouns they use.

Be patient – it isn't always easy to learn new skills!

For more information, visit bit.ly/JHUpronoun.

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