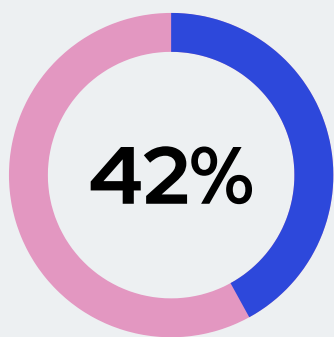


RESPECTING PRONOUNS

IN THE CLASSROOM



The Trevor Project's 2021 National Survey on LGBTQ Youth Mental Health found that 42% of LGBTQ seriously considered attempting suicide in the past year.

Trans and Nonbinary youth who reported having their pronouns respected by all the people they lived with attempted at half the rate of those who did not have their pronouns respected.

Things to Know

- Pronouns are a form of gender expression and presentation and reflect gendered identities.
- Pronouns do not necessarily dictate gender identity, pronouns are a way to represent the self.
- People can have gender non-conforming (GNC) pronouns without being a different gender or trans-identified.
 - Ex: (e.g. gender non-binary and non-conforming identities)

Common Pronouns

Gendered Pronouns

he/him, she/hers

Non-binary/Non-Conforming

they/them, ze/hir, xe/xem

Note: Some trans-identified and nonbinary/non-conforming individuals are comfortable with a combination of pronouns such as he/they, she/they.

What do you do in this case? Usually, this means the pronouns are interchangeable! It never hurts to ask, however, what the student prefers specifically in the classroom setting.

What do you do if you accidentally misgender someone?

Do's

- If you slip up and you notice, correct yourself **BRIEFLY** and move on.
- If you don't notice and someone corrects you, say "**thank you**" and move on.
- Practice for yourself: For every time you get a pronoun wrong, form 3 sentences in your head with the correct pronoun.
- Take an **active role** in your classes via interrupting people with quick corrections.

Example: Another student misgenders someone, just jump in and say "they" (or whatever applies) and move on

Example #1 ✓

Professor: "I agree with Alex, he's right."

Alex: "They"

Professor: "Right, thanks! I appreciate it. They're right."

Dont's

Don't make anyone feel like a burden for having pronouns you struggle with.

DON'T: Say "it's just hard" or things of that sort

DO: If you need, say "Thank you for sharing your authentic self, I'm learning and I appreciate corrections".

Don't make anyone feel like they need to alleviate your guilt.

DON'T: Apologize profusely if you get a pronoun wrong - this puts students in the odd position of having to make you feel better

Example #2 ✗

Professor: "I agree with Alex, he's right."

Alex: "They"

Professor: "I'm sorry! I'm still learning but all these pronouns are too difficult nowadays."

What's the best way to ask about student pronouns?

One starting point is sending out a survey prior to the start of the semester inquiring about your students. You can ask for preferred names, name pronunciations, and gender identity for each student!

Gender affirmation is one of the simplest ways to improve the experience of trans and nonbinary students.