

Pronouns Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

What do you mean when you talk about pronouns?

Answer:

- A pronoun is a word that refers to either people talking ("I" or "you") or someone or something that is being talked about (like "she," "them," "it," and "this"). Personal pronouns ("he," "she," "they," "ze," etc) specifically refer to the pronoun that a person uses for themselves.

What if I make a mistake and don't use the pronouns someone wants me to use when I refer to them?

Answer:

- It's okay! Everyone slips up from time to time. The best thing to do if you use the wrong pronoun for someone is to say something right away, like "Sorry, I meant she." If you realize your mistake after the fact, apologize in private and move on.
- A lot of the time it can be tempting to go on and on about how bad you feel that you messed up or how hard it is for you to get it right. But please, don't! It is inappropriate and makes the person who was misgendered feel awkward and responsible for comforting you, which is absolutely not their job.

How do I ask someone what their pronouns are?

Answer:

- Try asking: "What are your personal pronouns?" or "Which pronouns do you like to hear?" or "Can you remind me which pronouns you like for yourself?" It can feel awkward at first, but it is not half as awkward as getting it wrong or possibly making a hurtful assumption.
- If you are asking as part of an introduction exercise and you want to quickly explain what a personal pronoun is, you can try something like this: "Tell us your name, where you come from, and your personal pronouns, meaning the pronouns that you want others to use when they talk about you. For example, I'm Alex, I'm from North Carolina, US and I like to be identified using 'ze, hir, and hirs' pronouns. So you could say, 'Ze went to hir car' if you were talking about Alex."

Why are pronouns important?

Answer:

- You can't always know what someone's personal pronouns are by looking at them.
- Asking and correctly using someone's personal pronouns is one of the most basic ways to show your respect for their gender identity.
- When someone is referred to using the wrong pronoun, it can make them feel disrespected, invalidated, dismissed, alienated, or dysphoric (or, often, all of the above.)

What are the different pronoun options and how would I use them?

Answer:

He, him, his, himself: "He is a writer and wrote that book himself. Those ideas are his. I like both him and his ideas."

No Pronouns (Use My Name): "Alex is a writer and wrote that book. Those ideas are Alex's. I like both Alex and Alex's ideas."

She, her, hers, herself: "She is a writer and wrote that book herself. Those ideas are hers. I like both her and her ideas."

They, them, theirs, themselves: "They are a writer and wrote that book themselves. Those ideas are theirs. I like both them and their ideas."

Ze, hir, hirs, hirself: "Ze is a writer and wrote that book hirself. Those ideas are hirs. I like both hir and hir ideas."

Ask me: This option can be used if you do not want to enter in MySlice and would like to be asked what your Pronouns are. "Ask me" can also be selected if you use pronouns that are not listed in the current set, you use mixed sets of pronouns (for example, "she/they," or "he/ze"), or have a fluid usage of pronouns.

Prefer Not to Say: This option can be used if you do not wish to share your pronouns with others or you do not wish to explicitly specify your pronouns. Please note that the pronoun field is initially defaulted to blank, but will need to have one of the drop down options selected to save/update.

Can I create new pronouns?

Answer:

- Currently, there is not a way to create your own pronouns at Syracuse University. If you would like to recommend a new pronoun(s), please feel free to send an email to PGPNAC@syr.edu and it will be reviewed and discussed by the [Pronoun, Gender Preferred Name Advisory Council \(PGPNAC\)](#).

How does a person update pronouns at Syracuse University?

Answer:

- As of October 1, 2019, any Student, Faculty or Staff member will have the ability to update personal pronouns in the MySlice portal. If you click [MySlice - MyProfile](#) you will find instructions on how and where to update your pronouns, as well as other Profile information.

Where and how are pronouns used at Syracuse University?

Answer:

- Socially, personal pronouns are to be used in a respectful manner upon learning the ones a person uses.
- Technologically, pronouns will be used in various systems and software at Syracuse University as requests for them to be pulled from MySlice into the systems are received and reviewed by the [Pronoun, Gender, and Preferred Name Advisory Council \(PGPNAC\)](#). To make a request, please use this form: [Create Request](#)
If you'd prefer, you can reach out directly via e-mail at PGPNAC@syr.edu.

What Systems are currently receiving a person's pronouns from MySlice?

Answer:

- None

Training Materials:



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