

Creating a Community of Inclusion

The Importance of Lived Names & Pronouns

Being aware of lived names and pronouns, and how and when to use them, shows respect for our peers. It also contributes to the inclusive environment our [Principles of Community](#) and nondiscrimination policies seek to promote.

Lived Names or Names in Use are names other than legal names which many people use for a variety of reasons. The law often refers to these names as “preferred names.”

Whether we realize it or not, we often refer to a person using gender implied pronouns (based on a person's appearance or name): "he" (for a boy/man) and "she" (for a girl/woman). These associations are not always accurate.

When a person shares their pronouns, they are naming the pronouns that they want to be referred by in the singular third person, and their choice should be respected.

Examples: She/Her, He/Him, They/Them, Ze/Zir, No pronouns - use my name.

When you introduce yourself with your pronouns, you are creating space for others to name their pronouns in ways that might not be what their gender expression indicates. “For example: Hi, my name is Travis, I use they, them pronouns,”

Sharing of pronouns is an opportunity to be respectful in our community. Avoid saying "masculine pronouns," "feminine pronouns," or "I don't care." If you are unsure what pronouns to use, ask: "What pronouns would I use to be respectful?"

Understanding Harms to Our Community & Stepping In

We all must strive to refer to a person by the name, gender and pronouns they have identified. If you make a mistake, remember to **ACT: Apologize, Correct and Try again.** ”

Unfortunately, sometimes individuals will intentionally refer to a person by a different gender or pronouns than those they have identified; this is known as “misgendering.” This behavior can constitute harassment or bullying, and may violate University policies.

Other ways that individuals may engage in harmful behavior towards transgender or nonbinary persons include asking unprofessional, inappropriate or intrusive questions about a person's life, their personal health information, their bodies, or their relationships.

These behaviors harm individuals by denying or disrespecting their identity and boundaries. It can also make individuals less safe by outing them to others who may hold discriminatory or hostile beliefs about persons who are nonbinary or transgender.

Beyond the harms that misgendering or intrusive questions cause individuals, it also violates professional standards as well as our community values, and may violate our institutional policies as well as California state law.

As a community committed to creating opportunities for all members to do their best academically and professionally, we each have a role to play in stepping in when we see others committing these harms. The bystander skills outlined in this course — intervening directly, creating a distraction, asking others with more authority to step in, or checking in with the targeted person — will help prepare you to take action and help create a safer, more respectful and inclusive community.