

Taking Action to Respect Personal Pronouns



We often make assumptions about people's gender identities and the pronouns they use based on our perception of their name or appearance. Sometimes these assumptions are not accurate. Using the wrong pronouns for someone can unintentionally communicate that their identity is not respected, or that who they are is not valid or possible.

If people regularly use the correct pronouns for you, sharing your pronouns shows others that respecting all individuals' gender identities is important to you.

Sharing pronouns contributes to a culture of respect by establishing a norm where people's gender identities aren't assumed, and sending a message of welcomeness to people whose pronouns are often incorrectly assumed or not respected.



learn more about pronouns at lgbtq.wwu.edu

mypronouns.org was a helpful resource in creating this document

EO/AA. To request this document in an alternate format, please contact the LGBTQ+ Director at (360) 650-7500 or L.K.Langley@wwu.edu.



SHARE

When doing introductions at the beginning of classes and meetings, invite people to share their pronouns. Model doing this.

Add pronouns to your business cards and email signature block. Examples are at lgbtq.wwu.edu.

Include pronouns with your name where faculty/staff are listed on your department website.

At meetings and events with name tags or name plates, include space for people to share pronouns. Again, model doing this.



RECOGNIZE

Pay attention when people share their pronouns in person and in writing. This is an opportunity to disrupt assumptions you might be making unintentionally.

When someone shares their pronouns, use those pronouns consistently when communicating about the person unless they request otherwise, whether or not they are around. Every student, staff person and faculty member knows best what pronouns are appropriate for them.

If you accidentally use the wrong pronouns for someone, correct yourself.



PRACTICE

If a pronoun is unfamiliar to you, or if it is different than the pronoun someone used before, getting it right can take effort. Practice. "Dani is a great participant in my seminar. Zir insights enrich our discussions. When ze comes to office hours tomorrow, I'm going to talk with zir about pursuing graduate school."



KEEP GOING

Incorporate readings, art, case studies, and examples that reflect gender diversity, including positive representation of people who use pronouns such as they, ze, or ey.

Share these ideas with your colleagues and friends.