WEAR IT PURPLE

Misgendering + Pronouns

A guide to using inclusive language when speaking languages other than English

Xier

孩子

Iel

هما

Loro

同学

同学

هما

lel

Elle

孩子

What are pronouns?

Pronouns are words used to refer to a person rather than using their name.

Some pronouns are gendered like she/her/hers or he/him/his and some are gender neutral, like they/them/theirs.

You cannot tell what pronouns people use by looking at them.

Using the right pronouns for someone is super important because it affirms the way that person sees themselves.

Some people, including those who identify as trans and gender diverse, may ask others to change the pronouns used to refer to them to affirm their gender.

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Pronouns: Closer Look

SHE/HER
pronounced as
she

a pronoun often used by female identifying people, sometimes also used by non-binary people

HE/HIM
pronounced as
he

a pronoun often used by male identifying people, sometimes also used by non-binary people

THEY/THEM
pronounced as
they

Most common gender neutral pronoun, often used by non-binary or transgender people

XE/XEM
pronounced as
zee

a popular gender neutral pronoun commonly used by non-binary or trans people

ZE/HIR
pronounced as
zee/heer

a popular gender neutral pronoun, often used by non-binary or trans-gender people

EY/EM
pronounced as
aye/eh

a common gender neutral pronoun, often used by non-binary people

HIR/HIR
pronounced as
here

A common gender neutral pro-noun, often used by non-binary people.

FAE/FAER
pronounced as
fay

a less common gender neutral pronoun, sometimes used by non-binary people

HU/HU
pronounced as
hyoom/hoom

a less common gender neutral pronoun, sometimes used by non-binary people

Please note that this is not an exclusive list of all pronouns or combinations. Pronouns can be varied and are intersectional, for example, He/They, She/They, She/They/He.

WHAT ARE THE BASICS OF USING INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE?

Using inclusive language makes a real difference to LGBTQ+ people. Our top three tips are:

1. If someone discloses to you that they're from one of the LGBTQ+ communities, respectfully ask what terms they use to describe themselves, then use those terms.

2. Don't question or make assumptions about someone's gender, sexuality or relationship. Accept and respect how people define their gender and sexuality.

3. Use language that acknowledges that we have diverse relationships and families. This can mean using words like "partner" or "parents", particularly when describing groups of people.

WHAT IF I MAKE A MISTAKE?

People may worry that they will offend or be embarrassed if they use the wrong term, name or pronoun, particularly for trans and gender diverse people.

It's important to try to use respectful language and some mistakes are understandable, particularly when you are learning. If you make a mistake, apologise promptly and move on. Don't dwell on it, and don't give up – keep trying to get it right.

Repeated mistakes indicate a lack of respect, and can be very distressing. If it continues or is deliberate, it could constitute bullying or discrimination which is unlawful.

HOW SHOULD I WELCOME PEOPLE TO MEETINGS OR EVENTS?

You can easily include everyone and every gender by saying things like "Welcome, everyone" or "Good morning, folks". These broader terms can also be useful when sending emails to large groups or departments

Loro

Xier

هما

Lo

انتما

What is misgendering?

Misgendering means using language to refer to someone that does not match that person's gender, for example pronouns (she/he/they). Not using a person's pronouns is a form of bullying and really hurts because it tells the person that you don't respect them.

Misgendering can happen by genuine mistake, particularly if the person has only recently affirmed their gender, it may take a while for people to stop using the old pronouns and name.

Misgendering can sometimes happen on purpose, a person might demonstrate a lack of respect by purposefully misusing pronouns or the trans or gender diverse person's birth name (the name given to them at birth that does not match their affirmed gender, sometimes called a "dead name") rather than their preferred name. They may also refer to the trans or gender diverse person as "it" or "that" which is highly offensive.

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Pronouns: LOTE

HOW CAN WE USE INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE WHEN SPEAKING LANGUAGES OTHER THAN ENGLISH?

Whether we are using, learning or teaching different languages at school it is important to consider our pronoun and gender-neutral language use. By doing so, we are ensuring we are being respectful of others and the way they identify.

Many different languages have gender-neutral terms built into their language, whilst many others have created inclusive terms to modernize the language and keep up with the times. Some romance languages are problematic for trans and non-binary people, as the language is deeply rooted in the two binary genders, making it difficult for some people to see their identity reflected in the language. Below is a list of examples of pronoun and gender-neutral terms available for use across a variety of languages.

عربى

Arabic

Modern standard Arabic, based on Koranic classical Arabic has a dual option for nouns and verbs that doesn't imply a specific gender:

هما (huma) - They
انتما (intuma) - You

中国人

Chinese

In Chinese, verbally all gendered pronouns sound the same, and so they technically can be gender neutral. Below are some useful examples:

同学 (tong xue) - Gender-neutral term for a classmate
孩子 (hai zi) – Gender-neutral term for a young person.

French

Française

Iel / iel is the main gender-neutral pronoun used in French and is a contraction of the two binary pronouns "il" and "elle".

German
Deutsche

Xier, Xieser, Xiem – "They, them theirs". Used as a singular translation of they/them pronouns from English.

Italiano
Italian

Italian, as with other romance languages, presents challenges for inclusion of non-binary genders in that grammatically there only exists masculine and feminine genders. However, different approaches may transform the way Italian is spoken to make it more gender inclusive.

Lo - First-person: I
Loro - They/Them:

日本語
Japanese

Japanese is full of different language features that communicate your gender identity. In English, we rely on others to call us by our preferred pronouns, such as "he," "she," or "they," but in Japanese, the power to express your gender through language often rests in your hands. (This information requires some understanding of Hiragana). The term "Jibun" is increasing in popularity for non-binary people to use as a first-person pronoun.

First Person ("I")a				
Masculine				Feminine
俺	僕	自分	私	あたし

Second Person ("You")			
Masculine			Feminine
てめぇ	お前	あなた	あんた

Sentence Enders:

Another major way that gender is expressed in Japanese is using sentence enders. These refer to conversational particles, like よ and ね , as well as question particles, like か or かな , that come at the end of Japanese sentences.

Masculine	Neutral	Feminine
Conversation Enders		
そうだぜ	そうだよ	そうよ
そうだな	そうだね	そうね
行くぞ	行くよ	行くわよ

Many young people are also re-creating gender neutral terms within the language. A popular colloquial term with young people is "Chuusei" (pronounced chew-say) and can be written like this: ちゅうせい (中性)

Spanish

Español

When learning and speaking Spanish we are used to: "el" for he/him/his, and "ella" for she/her/hers. "**Elle**" is used for they/them and "**elles**" for theirs.

هما

同学

Iel

Elle

孩子

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Wear It Purple acknowledges the Traditional Owners of country throughout Australia, their diversity, histories, knowledge and their continuing connections to land and community. We pay our respects to all Australian Indigenous Peoples and their cultures, and to Elders of past, present and emerging.