

UpFront: Thinking About Gender Identity and Pronouns

by Anna Marceau (they/them/theirs), Amrita Geddam (she/her/hers), Ellina Seckel (she/her/hers)



As part of PSW's commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion, we want to share some guidance and collective understanding about gender identity, pronouns, and other related terms.

In a recent NPR story, Mary Emily O'Hara, a communications officer at GLAAD, explained, "Pronouns are basically how we identify ourselves apart from our name. It's how someone refers to you in conversation. And when you're speaking to people, it's a really simple way to affirm their identity. It's really just about letting someone know that you accept their identity. And it's as simple as that."

Here are some current, accepted definitions of gender-related terms:

- **Gender:** Set of social, physical, psychological, and emotional traits, often influenced by societal expectations, that classify an individual as feminine, masculine, androgynous or other
- **Gender identity:** One's innermost concept of self from the perspective of one's gender
- **Gender expression:** Outward manner in which an individual expresses or displays their gender
- **Sex:** The biology a person is born with, including genetic, hormonal, anatomic, and physiological characteristics; related terms include "sex assigned at birth," "natal sex," "biologic sex," or "birth sex." DFAB/AFAB stands for "designated/assigned female at birth." DMAB/AMAB stands for "designated/assigned male at birth."
- **Transgender:** An umbrella term, sometimes shortened to "trans" or "trans,*" that refers to a person whose gender identity differs from their sex assigned at birth
- **Cisgender:** Refers to a person whose gender identity aligns with their sex assigned at birth
- **Non-binary:** Having a gender that is in between or beyond the two categories "man" and "woman," or fluctuating between man and woman as having no gender, either permanently or some of the time
- **Social titles:** Not legally part of a name, used for identity purposes and as a matter of courtesy (e.g., Mr., Ms., Miss, Mrs., Mx.)

Pronouns are used to refer to someone in the third person. Examples include she/her/hers, he/him/his, they/them/theirs, and ze/hir/hirs.

Cis Gender

Cis Women
Cis Men

Transgender

Trans Women Trans Men

Non-Binary

Genderqueer
Bigender
Agender
Genderfluid

While you might hear discourse about whether using "they" to refer to a single person is grammatically correct, it is important to remember that this is not merely a matter of linguistics, but an integral part of a person's identity and expression thereof. A person's sense of self should not be used as a stage for a debate. To support this, in recent years, major style guides like the Associated Press Stylebook have updated their guidance to include provisions for using "they" and "them" when referring to an individual.

What does it mean if a person uses the pronouns "he/they" or "she/they"?

In the NPR story, Rodrigo Heng-Lehtinen, deputy executive director of the National Center for Transgender Equality, says, "That means that the person uses both pronouns, and you can alternate between those when referring to them. So either pronoun would be fine — and ideally mix it up, use both. It just means that they use both pronouns that they're listing."

GLAAD's associate director of transgender representation, Alex Schmider, says it depends on the person. "For some people, they don't mind those pronouns being interchanged for them. And for some people, they are using one specific pronoun in one context and another set of pronouns in another, dependent on maybe safety or comfortability." The best approach, Schmider says, is to listen to how people refer to themselves.

When should you provide your pronouns?

- All introductions
- Start of meetings
- Email signature
- Zoom names/other platforms
- Pronoun pin
- Social media bios
- Recruitment materials
- Surveys that gather demographic information
- Presentations

PSW Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Statement

One voice, one vision for all. PSW supports diversity in our membership, equity in our opportunities, and inclusiveness in our organization. We embrace our differences, unifying efforts to enhance patient care while advancing our profession. Our patients are diverse, and so are we. Click [here](#) to view the PSW DEI Organization Recommendations.

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FOR MORE INFORMATION & RESOURCES:

- <https://www.mypronouns.org/resources>
- <https://www.npr.org/2021/06/02/996319297/gender-identity-pronouns-expression-guide-lgbtq>
- https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/general_writing/grammar/pronouns/gendered_pronouns_and_singular_they.html

CLICK HERE TO VIEW THE PSW DEI ORGANIZATION RECOMMENDATIONS



**Pharmacy Society
of Wisconsin**

DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION

Organization Recommendations

PSW will support diversity in our membership, equity in opportunities, and inclusiveness in our organization, empowering pharmacists, technicians, and student pharmacists to address systemic racism, and have broader cultural humility in the care of patients.