

#2 Qzine

**Inclusion in the workplace:
pronoun and language
strategy**



THE ADECCO GROUP



When speaking about one another in the third person, we do so by using pronouns.

When discussing about someone with another individual, it is frequently helpful to be aware of the pronouns that person uses when referring to themselves.



Inclusion in the workplace: pronoun and language strategy

Pronouns are words that we use to refer to people instead of their names. Pronouns are useful linguistic tools, but they are also important for communicating identities and experiences.

There is no exhaustive list of pronouns, but most of us are probably familiar with a few common ones. Many people use one or more of the pronouns he, she, they, xe, ze, and others. Some people do not use pronouns and are only addressed by their first names. Everyone has a preferred method of being addressed; learning someone's pronouns is essential for respectful communication.

Transgender and non-binary students, staff, and faculty may experience misgendering, which is the intentional or unintentional incorrect use of pronouns to refer to them – frequently in their daily lives.

Pronouns have emerged as a prominent focal point as a result of the growing number of businesses that are investing in LGBTQ+ inclusion and gender-inclusive workplaces. These practices have been rapidly adopted by the business world, from the inclusion of pronouns in email signatures and business cards to the distribution of pronoun buttons to personnel working in retail.

The following resource is intended to assist employers in gaining a better knowledge of the intersection of day-to-day communications, pronoun usage, gender identity, and expression while at work, as well as practical ideas for inclusion.



Pronouns are used in every day speech and writing to take the place of people's names. We frequently use them without thinking about it. Often, when speaking of someone in the third person, these pronouns have a gender implied. See following every-day examples below:

Can you please call Mrs. Thompson ?
She should be available now.

Roberts references are great, he has achieved
great results in the past years.

Lorena has rejected the meeting, she is very
busy today.

Pronoun references such as these and others are commonplace in the discussions we have in our daily lives, whether we are talking on the phone, in person, or by email. In addition, many people rely on language that is gendered in order to portray respect and formality, as well as a tone that is welcoming to customers:

- **Pleased to have you with us this morning, ladies and gentlemen.**
- **The updated laptop model is here if you'd want to see it, sir.**
- **Please come to this counter, and I'll be happy to help you out, miss**



Pronouns = Workplace Culture

Making an incorrect assumption about the gender identity or expression of another person, and, by extension, their pronouns, can be insulting, harmful, and, if done repeatedly, can constitute workplace bias or harassment. This is true even though the majority of people who engage in these types of interactions have good intentions. Take note that the term “their” was employed to articulate a hypothetical person without presuming the individual’s gender in the sentence that came before this one. Pronouns are connected to our most fundamental sense of identity in the same way that our particular names are. They articulate who we are and how others in the world ought to acknowledge and address us in their conversations and interactions. Think about the how it makes you feel when someone introduces themselves but then calls you by the wrong name after they’ve already met you. When we find ourselves in situations like this, the majority of us frequently experience feelings of invalidation, such as, “Didn’t I tell them my name already?” I don’t understand why they forgot. Have they not taken the time to get to know me? Unfortuitously, a significant number of people who are aware of the significance of using appropriate pronouns are frequently individuals who have had the most direct experience with the agony and suffering that come along with being misgendered. In order to cultivate organizational cultures of respect and belonging, it is essential for businesses to implement inclusive pronoun practices in the workplace. This is true not only for the LGBTQ+ community, but also for anyone who in some way challenges the traditional model of gender identity and expression. A culture that encourages the use of pronoun practices that are inclusive is one that is supportive of a diverse range of employees and customers. It is extremely important for the Chief Financial Officer (CFO), who is a cisgender woman but has a low voice and is therefore frequently misgendered over the phone, to respectfully introduce pronouns. It is extremely important for the feminine-presenting cisgender male flight attendant who is sick and tired of being addressed as “ma’am.” When engaging

with employees or clients located in different countries, or personnel who are not native speakers and are not familiar with traditionally gendered names, it is essential for greater global cultural competency. It is possible that an employer will not always be able to see how they can successfully integrate practices and norms around pronouns in order to encourage more inclusiveness. This guide was written with that in mind, and it provides concrete, actionable advice on how to create more inclusive practices and processes addressing pronouns in the workplace. It was designed to be used by anybody who is interested in the topic.

In addition to the policies and practices that are outlined in this document, companies should take careful consideration to ensure that foundational standards of LGBTQ+ and gender workplace inclusion are implemented. Inclusive non-discrimination policies and LGBTQ+ 101 training are two important first steps. Companies should take careful consideration to ensure that foundational standards of LGBTQ+ and gender workplace inclusion are implemented. It is recommended that the recommendations presented in this document be combined with educational efforts to cultivate an organizational culture that is inclusive of transgender and Gender Non-Conforming (GNC) individuals. This will help ensure that these workers are not accidentally put in awkward or hostile situations. To put it another way, if your business does not already have essential support systems in place to safeguard and encourage its transgender and gender nonconforming employees, you should not implement any practices revolving around pronouns.

The earliest recorded use of “they” as a gender neutral personal pronoun was in the 14th century in a French poem called William the Werewolf.

Merriam-Webster added the singular use of the pronoun they to its dictionary in 2019 to reflect the fact that people who don't identify as male or female are using the word more and more. The word “they” was the most-looked-up word on the internet in 2019, and the dictionary chose it as its “Word of the Year” (Locker, 2019). Even though the non-binary community has only recently begun to use they, the singular form of they has been used for a long time. In fact, they has been used as a singular pronoun for over 600 years because the English language “famously lacks a gender-neutral singular pronoun to fit neatly with singular pronouns like everyone or someone” (Locker, 2019).



The Importance of Inclusion is Now!

Recent studies have shown that it is absolutely necessary for businesses to adopt inclusive pronoun policies in order to remain competitive. The current demographic trends reflect new perspectives that are more accommodating of individuals' choices about their gender identity and expression, particularly among younger generations.

There has never been a more fluid conception of gender than there is today.

Two percent of respondents from 27 different nations participated in a global poll that was carried out in 2021. These individuals self-identified as transgender, non-binary, non-conforming, gender-fluid, or another category.

According to the results of the LGBTQ+ Pride 2021 Global Survey conducted by Ipsos, there is a significant generational divide on gender identity and sexual desire. Those who self-identify as transgender, non-binary, non-conforming, gender-fluid, or as other than male or female make up an average of 4 percent of Gen Z (those born after 1997) compared to 1 percent of all adults. This finding holds true across all 27 countries in which the poll was conducted.

Younger adults also have a considerably higher likelihood of identifying as something other than heterosexual and of claiming that they experience an equal amount of attraction to both sexes. The study, which was carried out on the online platform of Ipsos Global Advisor between April 23 and May 7, 2021 with the participation of more than 19,000 individuals aged 16 (or 18, depending on the country), to 74, reveals the extent to which the amount of exposure to LGBTQ+ people and engagement with the LGBTQ+ community varies from country to country.

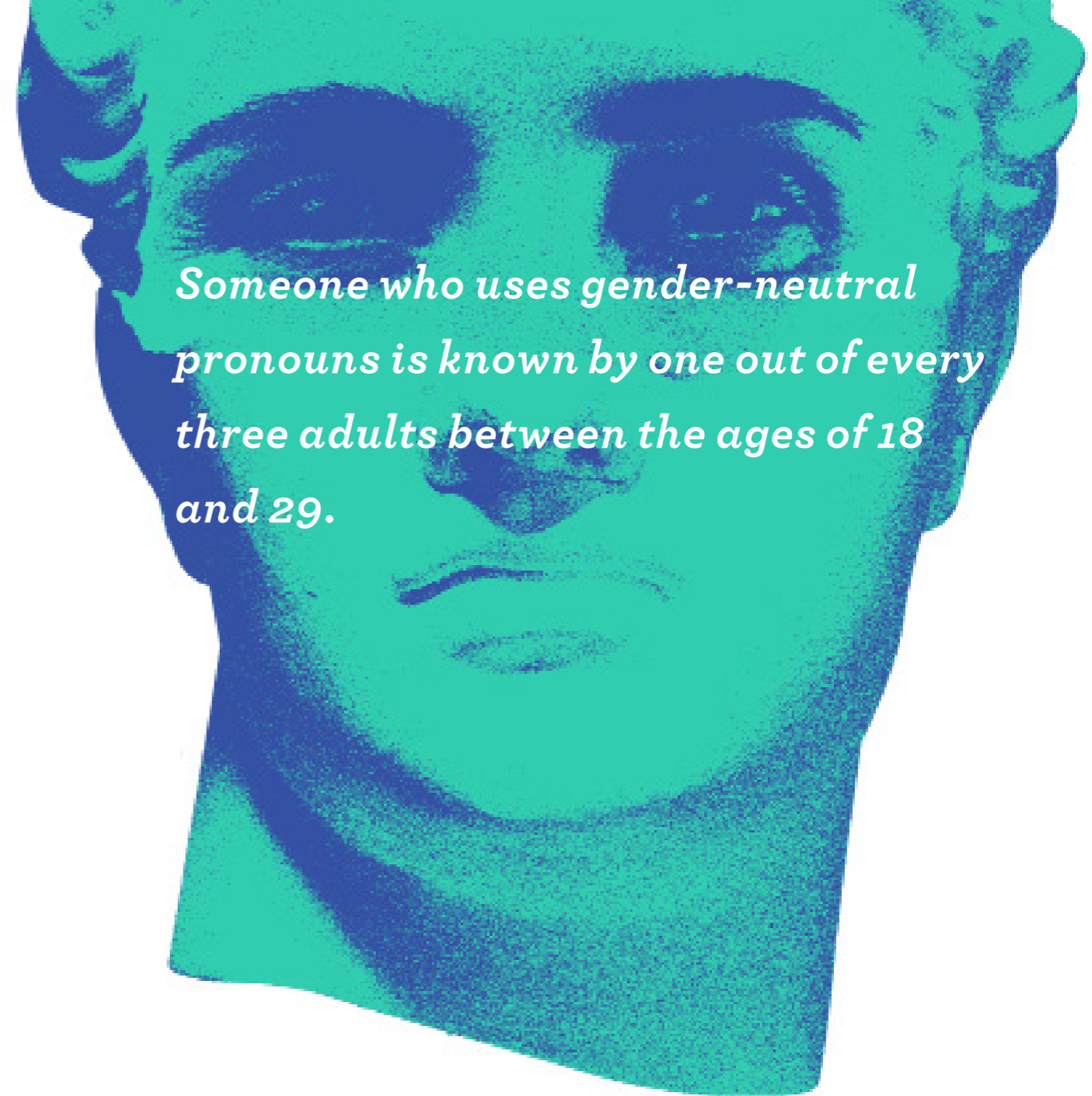
66 percent of people in Brazil claim to have a gay or lesbian family, friend, or colleague, whereas just 7 percent of people in Japan and South Korea make the same claim.

In the United States, 57 percent of people report having a relative, friend, or coworker who is gay or lesbian, 30 percent say they have a friend or coworker who is bisexual, 14 percent say they have a friend or coworker who is transgender, and 14 percent say they have a friend or coworker who is non-binary, non-conforming, or gender-fluid.

The poll also reveals that there is a significant increase in support for corporate action that promotes equality compared to resistance - 47 percent support compared to 19 percent opposition on average internationally, and 48 percent support compared to 20 percent opposition in the United States.

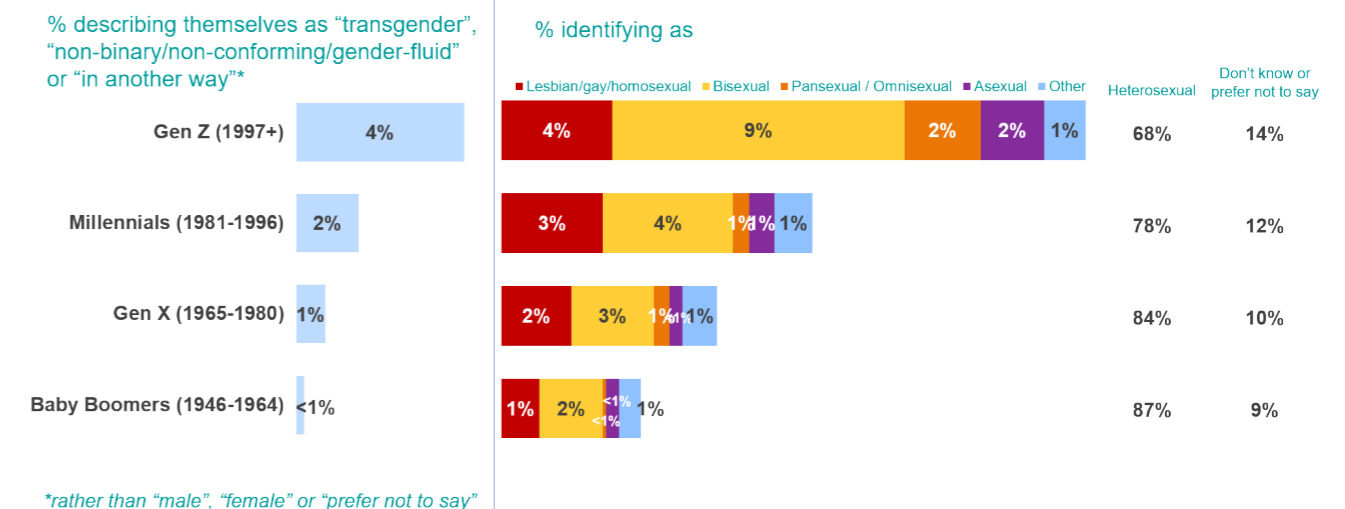
The open disclosure by LGBTQ+ individuals regarding their sexual orientation or gender identity with anyone and everyone is supported by majorities in most, but not all, countries. And there is generally more support than opposition toward LGBTQ+ persons exhibiting affection in public (37% support versus 27% opposition globally, 41% support versus 27% opposition in the U.S.). Additionally, there are more LGBTQ+ characters on television, in films, and in advertising (35 percent support vs. 25 percent opposition globally, 39 percent vs. 27 percent in the U.S.). In the majority of countries, there is a lot of support for lesbian, gay, and bisexual athletes in sports teams coming out about their orientation. This includes being open about their participation in sports.

On the other hand, public opinion is split and widely differs from country to country with regard to whether or not transgender athletes should be permitted to compete in sports based on the gender with which they identify. 32 percent of people around the world are in favor of it, 32 percent are against it, and 36 percent have no opinion either way. 27 percent of people in the United States are in favor of it, while 45 percent are against it, and 28 percent are undecided.



Someone who uses gender-neutral pronouns is known by one out of every three adults between the ages of 18 and 29.

Gender Identity and Sexual Orientation by Generation (Global Country Average)



Employees Look for Inclusive Policies Regarding Gender

There is currently a majority of support across the globe for gender inclusiveness in the workplace. According to the findings of a study conducted by Pew Research, 59 percent of members of the Generation Z agree that gender options other than “man” and “woman” should be included on forms and/or online profiles. According to the results of a poll conducted by Harris Poll in 2018, seventy-four percent of respondents feel that companies should learn and utilize employees’ preferred names and pronouns in the workplace. In addition, 65 percent of respondents agree that employers should step in when an employee routinely misuses a co-pronouns worker’s or chosen name, and 58 percent believe that such misuse constitutes a form of harassment in the workplace (The Harris Poll, 2018).



The use of inclusive pronouns is essential, as inclusivity leads to improved business.

Inclusion of LGBTQ people generally improves the results of business. Research shows that LGBTQ+-inclusive working environments lead to higher performance, productivity, talent retention, and overall well-being in the workplace (The Human Rights Campaign, 2014). In addition to this, policies that are LGBTQ+ friendly are related with increased firm value, increased productivity, and increased profitability. The younger generations are actively seeking work at businesses that share their own principles of inclusiveness and that facilitate connected cultures of belonging (Johansson, 2017).

In addition, a workforce that is becoming more international calls for the development of new instruments to ensure that fundamental values like as respect and cultural sensitivity are incorporated into regular interactions. Incorporating and normalizing techniques to identify pronouns in the workplace is not only essential for the inclusion of LGBTQ+ individuals, but it can also be helpful in situations of cross-cultural communication in which pronouns are not as obvious.

A Big Deal.

Everyone’s mental health and overall well-being can benefit by using the appropriate pronouns for a person, but this is especially true for transgender and gender non-conforming people. Misgendering a transgender or gender nonconforming person adds another another obstacle to the long list of difficulties that these individuals may often face.

It is possible for it to bring on a wide variety of negative emotions, some of the more common ones being dysphoria, anxiety, stigmatization, diminished self-esteem, and humiliation. The provision of gender-affirmative support can have a significant influence, and may even save lives. Recent research have shown that transgender people who have supportive co-workers and work environments had lower rates of suicidal thoughts and attempts than those who do not.

One example of this can be found in the workplace (Herman, Brown & Haas, 2019). Studies have shown that gender-affirmative support can help those who identify as transgender or gender nonconforming have less symptoms of depression, higher levels of self-esteem, and an overall improvement in their quality of life (Temkin & Vega, 2020).

Support and affirmation in one’s identity can have a positive impact on everyone’s life. Using pronouns together conveys a powerful message to everyone:

For transgender and gender non-conforming people, using the correct pronouns is a significant confirmation of their identity. There is a strong sense of self-acceptance and a sense of belonging that is fostered by this practice.

“Even though we aren’t familiar with one another just yet, there is an essential way for us to maintain our respect and dignity.”

*Many transgender/GNC people don’t use their birth name. Official records and selected names may differ.

Knowing How to use Pronouns

People use pronouns such as you, she, he, and they, to mention just a few, in place of an individual's name so that they do not have to keep repeating the same word over and over again. This is done in order to save time. When we communicate the third-person singular pronouns that we like others to use when referring to us in conversation using the pronouns that we use for ourselves when we share our personal pronouns with others, we are doing so in the context of sharing our personal pronouns.

These pronouns are not always linked to the gender that is assigned to a person at birth and can vary throughout the course of a person's lifetime. While the pronouns he and she most commonly refer to people who identify as male and female, respectively, gender-neutral pronouns do not correlate the subject of a sentence with a particular gender. This is in contrast to the gender-specific pronouns he and she, which do so. The vast majority of people who identify as gender expansive do not use the pronouns he and she. These persons include those who identify as non-binary, genderqueer, gender non-conforming, agender, and others.

These pronouns, on the other hand, are in direct opposition to the individual's internal sense of who they are, which is why many individuals prefer to refer to themselves using gender-neutral pronouns such as they and them. Please refer to Out & Equal's Best Practices for Non-Binary Inclusion in the Workplace for additional details regarding non-binary identities.

Although the pronoun they is the gender-neutral pronoun that is deployed in English-speaking non-binary cultures more frequently than any other alternative, it is still simply one of many gender-neutral pronoun options that are accessible.





Gender Pronouns Chart

Pride 2022 Edition

Subjective

Objective

Possessive

Reflexive

Examples

He

Him

His

Himself

He is walking.
It belongs to him.
The record is his.
He bought himself a Coke.

She

Her

Hers

Herself

She is walking.
It belongs to her.
The record is hers.
She bought herself a Coke.

They

Them

Theirs

Themselves

They are walking.
It belongs to them.
The record is theirs.
They bought themselves a Coke.

Ze

Hir/Zir

Hirs/Zirs

Hirself/Zirself

Ze is walking.
It belongs to hir.
The record is zirs.
Ze bought hirself a Coke.

Ve

Ver

Vis/Vers

Verself

Ve is walking.
It belongs to ver.
The record is vers.
Ve bought verself a Coke.

The Big Picutre

In an effort to broaden their scope of acceptance, members of the gender-expansive group are working to alter language on a worldwide scale. Some languages are considered to be genderless because they don't make any grammatical differences based on the speaker's gender, whereas others are built around the concept of binary gender (What are Genderless Languages, 2017). Nouns in languages like Spanish, for instance, can be categorised as either masculine or feminine depending on the context. Conjugation of adjectives and verbs is not unique to English; other languages, such as Russian and Arabic, do it as well. Russian and Arabic are examples. LGBTQ+ supporters have been at the forefront of attempts to introduce new and inclusive words, which is transforming the face of communication all around the world as a result. This is because languages that are primarily gendered do not recognise those who fall outside of the binary.

Here are a few examples:

Spanish

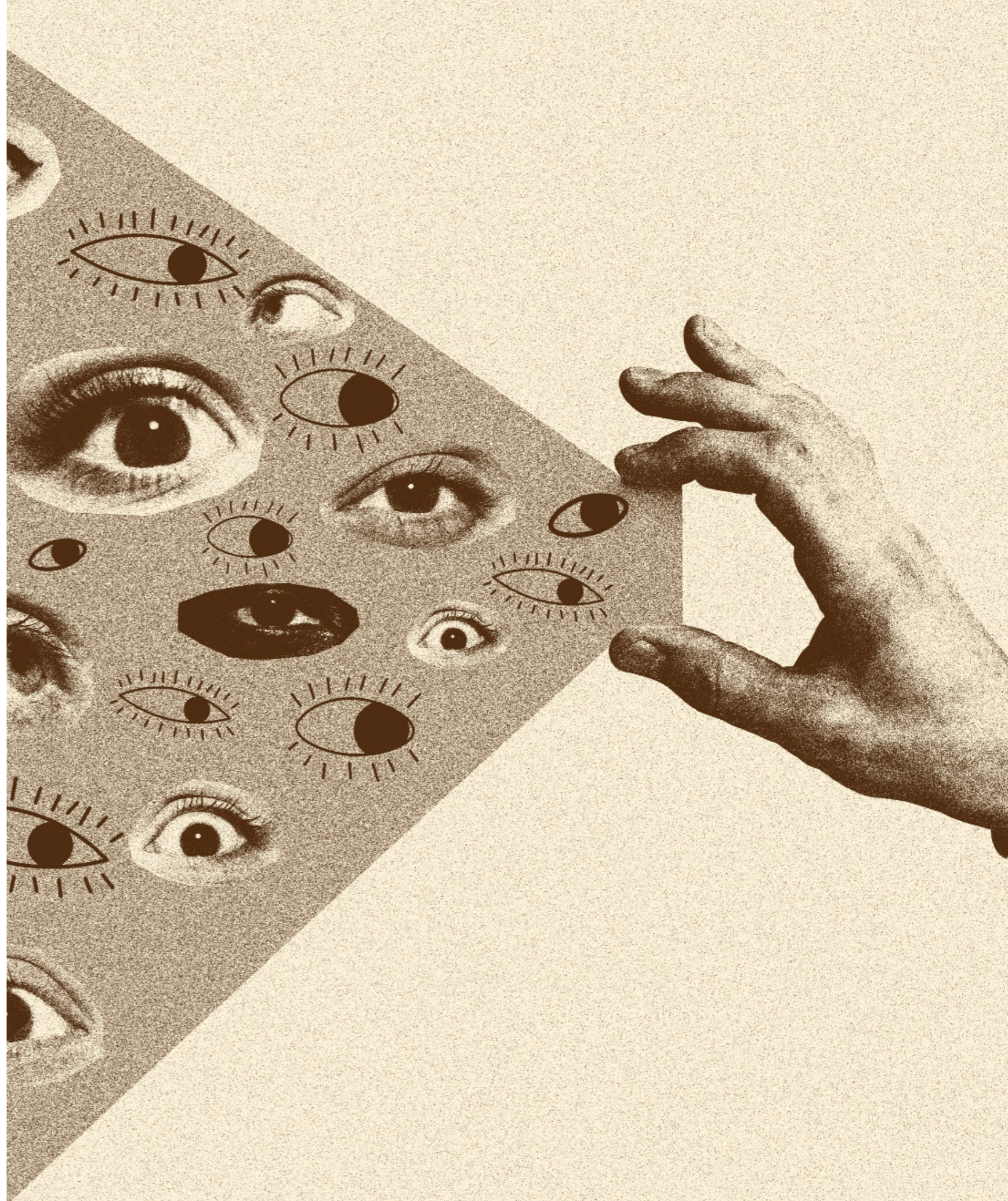
The pronouns used are "elle" (singular) and "elles" (plural). Nouns and adjectives, when applicable, adopt the ending of "e" (singular) or "es" (plural) instead of the feminine "a/as" and masculine "o/os".

- Elle está muy cansade
- Elles son mis mejores amiugues

Portuguese

The pronouns used are "ele" (singular) and "eles" (plural). In the possessive form, they become "deles" and "delas". Nouns and adjectives, when applicable, adopt the ending of "e" (singular) or "es" (plural) instead of the feminine "a/as" and masculine "o/os".

- Ele está calme e feliz. (Note: "feliz" doesn't change because it is not a gendered adjective.)
- Esta é a casa delas.



Creating a Strong Foundation

Building out basic practises around the introduction of and reference to pronouns is one way in which employers can exhibit greater levels of inclusivity in the workplace. The following recommendations highlight potential for your company to enhance organisational competency in this essential area of LGBTQ+ inclusion, and we encourage you to take advantage of these opportunities. Even though these guidelines call for relatively minor adjustments to be made, the results may wind up being rather important.

One of the most important aspects of inclusive pronoun practises:

Employers should keep the following advice as voluntary as possible so that they do not mistakenly put anyone under pressure to discuss their gender identification with their coworkers before they are ready to do so.

It is strongly recommended that the phrase “preferred pronouns” be avoided at all costs. This suggests that the usage of pronouns is not mandatory but rather an option rather than a mandate. Simply refer to them as “pronouns” instead.

Meetings

The opportunity to socialise pronouns in day-to-day activities are greatly enhanced through participation in meetings. They can be used as routine methods to establish cultures of respect by alerting employees, both new and existing, of which pronouns to use when referring to colleagues. This can apply to both new employees and existing employees. Meetings and other events hosted by the company should always begin with members of staff stating their names and indicating which pronouns they prefer to use. The following is an illustration of one way to make this easier:

“Hello, everyone, and thank you for coming. To kick off the meeting we are having today, we will first go around the room and introduce ourselves to one another. Please remember to include your full name, your pronouns, and your title in your introduction.

“Hello, my name is Ali Bassett, and I manage the Human Resources department here. She, her, and hers are the pronouns that I use.

It is an important and recommended best practise to ask individuals to share their pronouns. However, it should be up to the individual to decide whether or not to share pronouns, as doing so can cause anxiety for some people, particularly those who aren't out or are in the process of exploring their own pronouns and gender identity. Sharing pronouns should remain an optional choice for individuals.

Building out basic practises around the introduction of and reference to pronouns is one way in which employers can exhibit greater levels of inclusivity in the workplace. The following recommendations highlight potential for your company to enhance organisational competency in this essential area of LGBTQ+ inclusion, and we encourage you to take advantage of these opportunities.



Speaking in Front of Groups

I hope everyone had a good night. I am delighted that you were able to attend the meeting that took place today.

When speaking to groups of individuals, it is appropriate to use greetings that are not exclusive to either gender. Choose from a wide range of pleasantries to substitute gendered introductions such as ladies and gentlemen, which might be off-putting to staff members who identify in a different way. Among the available choices are:

- All of you
- Colleagues
- Everyone
- Valued guests
- Friends
- Team
- Group

Hi Team, I just wanted to check in and see if...



The Process of Hiring

Make sure there are early points in the process where candidates and people being interviewed can declare their preferred pronouns.

Examples of this could be:

- Including on forms a specific area for individuals to voluntarily list their pronouns and the name they have selected for themselves.
- By taking the initiative to introduce yourself during interviews using your own name and pronouns, you may pave the way for potential employees to talk about their experiences in their own words.

**Some examples include people who go by nicknames or transgender people whose names have not been corrected on official papers. Other examples include people who use aliases.*

Forms and Records

The creation of internal documentation provides businesses with extra opportunity to demonstrate their commitment to LGBTQ inclusion.

- Ensure all relevant documentation includes opportunity to voluntarily indicate pronouns on relevant written documentation. Examples include, but are not limited to, company profiles and directories, human resources data, applicant tracking systems (ATS), and other similar resources.
- Include gender identity alternatives other than male and female on any paperwork that pertains to this topic.
- Include the gender-neutral honorific Mx. (pronounced “mix”) as an option for the employees to choose from when you ask them to list honorifics. Members of the gender-expansive community utilise this honorific.

Even if participation is optional, the collection of sensitive information must comply with any applicable local regulations before it can be stored in such systems.



Putting Pronouns on Display for Email Signatures

As more businesses begin to implement initiatives to communicate pronouns in this manner, it is becoming increasingly typical to see the addition of pronouns in electronic mail signatures. Individuals can express their personal pronouns to their coworkers in a straightforward and cost-effective manner through the use of email signatures. Here are two distinct examples of how one might list pronouns within an email signature. Both of these examples are provided below.

John Doe
(Title)
(She/Her/Hers)

T +41 44 878 87 32
M +41 079 571 87 32
E email@adecco.com

Adecco Group AG
Bellerivestrasse 30, CH-8008 Zürich,
Switzerland
AdeccoGroup.com

John Doe
(Title)
Pronouns: She/Her/Hers

T +41 44 878 87 32
M +41 079 571 87 32
E email@adecco.com

Adecco Group AG
Bellerivestrasse 30, CH-8008 Zürich,
Switzerland
AdeccoGroup.com

It is not difficult to include pronouns in your email signature. If you work for a larger company or one that has strict standards about email signatures, you may need to coordinate your efforts to establish this practise with the Human Resources department of your organisation.

Businesses that undertake companywide initiatives to incorporate pronouns in email signatures should develop communication plans to thoughtfully inform individuals and address initial questions about pronoun inclusivity. These plans should also address any concerns that individuals may have about the inclusion of pronouns. Take, for instance, the messaging employed by Southbank Centre, which was featured in Forbes not too long ago:

“As part of our continued efforts to be inclusive of people of all gender identities, we are glad to confirm that anyone who wishes to do so may add pronouns to their email signature. If you have any questions or concerns about this policy, please do not hesitate to contact us.”

The practical benefit of include these phrases in your email signature is that it makes it obvious how you would want to be referred to, while also reassuring the recipient that you will respect their gender identity and choice of pronouns. It is an excellent method for normalising conversations about gender and fostering an inclusive working environment for transgender and non-binary people.



How to Communicate in Everyday Situations

Stay away from presumptions and make use of your curiosity.

When determining how to interact with new people, people frequently make assumptions about the gender identity of the other person. In point of fact, it is common for people to have an innate desire to learn more about mysterious people by looking for hints about how to connect and relate to them in new social situations. Although this may be a very natural process, our unconscious social cues are frequently based on preconceptions, which can hinder our ability to connect with, comprehend, and appreciate the people we come into contact with.

It is normal practise to form judgments about a person's gender based on their outward look, mannerisms, voice (particularly when communicating through phone), and name (most commonly in emails, resumes, and other written documentation.)

However, one's gender identification may not always be obvious to outside observers. It is a profound sense of identity that originates from inside and cannot necessarily be communicated to the outside world. In light of this, it is extremely important to combat the tendency to form assumptions based on gender. Instead, you should embrace what may be a gratifying social experience, which is enabling others to expose who they genuinely are to you. This will help you learn more about the people around you.

Which Pronoun Do You Prefer to Use?

If you're having trouble deciding which pronoun to use while referring to another person, here are a few general guidelines to keep in mind:

- **Listen**

First, pay attention to the pronouns that other people use when they talk about the person in question. Those who have a strong familiarity with the individual in question are likely to identify them correctly. Even though this is not a surefire method of discovering an individual's pronouns, it can provide helpful information on how to address someone in a manner that is courteous.

- **Please present yourself.**

If you have not yet met the person, you should take the initiative to introduce yourself by providing your name and the pronouns you like to use. This provides the other person with the chance and space to talk about themselves, including their name and pronouns.

Spaces for Public Display

When it comes to the daily operations of a company, there are a variety of inventive approaches of sharing information. Walmart has recently initiated a programme that enables employees to wear pronoun pins on their vests, badges, and lanyards. This is in addition to the policy that requires employees to include pronouns in their email signatures. Other businesses have implemented customer-facing campaigns to enable customers to share their pronouns, and these actions have been taken by customers. For instance, Lyft started a campaign called "Two is Too Few" and was the first ride-sharing service to integrate gender-neutral pronouns to its app. This made Lyft the pioneer in the ride-sharing industry. You should also think about whether or not your firm should show personal pronouns in the following areas:

- **Company directories**
- **Staff bios**
- **Company presentations/
PowerPoint templates**
- **Human resources and payroll
management platforms**
- **Nametags and name plates**
- **Teams profiles**
- **Business cards**
- **Social media profile**
- **Meeting participant names**



Ask

It is appropriate to inquire of a person, during the course of an introduction, how they would prefer to be addressed. You might introduce yourself as follows: "Hello, my name is Sarah. I prefer to use the she/her pronouns. What is the best way to address you? If you have already met the person and inquired about the pronouns that they use, but you are still unsure, it is acceptable to inquire once more in order to acquire clarity. However, in order to avoid drawing additional attention to the discussion, it is best to do so in a private setting rather than in front of a group of people.

Because some individuals may be less familiar with the idea of sharing personal pronouns, you should always be prepared to provide an explanation as to why it is important to share pronouns when any of these scenarios arise. For instance, you could say something along the lines of, "Sharing pronouns is an essential practise because we frequently guess an individual's pronouns based on their behaviour and appearance." However, these presumptions aren't always accurate and can be limiting. Because of this, the only way to truly know and ensure that we are respecting our coworkers is to inquire about and/or put foundational and inclusive practises regarding pronouns into place.

Hold on to the Choice

Some people may not be ready to share their pronouns, thus it should be an optional exercise.

Correcting Mistakes

A person is said to be misgendered when they are referred to with a pronoun that does not correspond with the gender identity they have chosen for themselves. Initial verbal encounters tend to have a higher incidence of this phenomenon compared to written communication.

Misgendering a person can cause them to experience acute moments of distress, regardless of whether it is done on purpose or by accident.

It is essential to have a plan for what to do in the event that you screw up. If you have mistakenly assigned a person's gender to them, the following actions are extremely important to take:

1. Sincerely and with composure, admit that you were wrong. Accept responsibility for your error, and refrain from engaging in defensive behaviour.
2. Make amends and get your facts straight. It's possible that you'll say something like, "I'm sorry, Tori—I should've said she," or "She mentioned—I'm sorry, they mentioned..." in response.
3. Do not bring further attention to the situation by spending a lot of time on the mistake or making it the focal point of the discussion. This will only serve to draw more attention to the problem. Of addition, don't bother trying to explain or excuse your error in judgement. This could end up causing your colleague much more injury and discomfort. Instead, you should apologise and then move forward. You might decide to later approach the person in private, acknowledge your error, and restate that you will endeavour to do better the next time, but this will depend on the circumstances and whether or not you realise your mistake after the fact.
4. If you have been told that you have referred to someone of the incorrect gender, please make sure to thank the person who has done so. When this is done, it encourages beneficial habits such as appreciating fellow workers, taking responsibility for one's actions, and giving and accepting constructive feedback.
5. Spend some time doing some introspection after the fact to figure out how you might improve your performance the next time around and use that knowledge to guide your actions. It takes some time to retrain your brain to utilise language that is gender neutral. You can avoid making these blunders in the future if you practise out loud on your own time and on your own terms.

Being proactive and anticipating potential challenges is essential.

Some members of the staff may have a tough time understanding why they should employ inclusive practises regarding pronouns and how they should do so. Recently, there has been a rise in the frequency with which people use pronouns in this setting. As a result, it is only natural to experience difficulties in the form of questions, uncertainty, and perhaps initial resistance. It is essential to plan ahead for potential challenges and set up systems that can help you overcome such challenges in order to have the ideas contained in this guide be properly implemented.

Organizational Level

When it comes to being inclusive, businesses can practise a number of behaviours on a consistent basis. When implementing any new policy or procedure, it is essential to follow certain best practises in particular:

- Make information and training available that focuses explicitly on transgender and gender non-conforming identities and the challenges they face in the workplace.
- Implement carefully thought-out plans for internal communication in order to explain changes in policy and procedures concerning pronouns and tie projects to the core principles of the organisation.
- It may take time and effort to become proficient in even the most basic changes in language; therefore, it is helpful to create opportunities for follow-up talks in order to provide further clarification and direction.
- By offering additional support and tools, managers can be better prepared to respond to inquiries and concerns pertaining to pronouns.



Relationship-level

Utilize the following in order to clear up any internal uncertainty and overcome any resistance:

Make use of empathy.

Empathy is a crucial support to draw on whenever one is looking for ways to more effectively connect with unfamiliar ideas or circumstances. When it comes to the process of making environments that people feel they belong in, empathy can help develop trust and a sense of relief; on the other hand, the lack of empathy can impair one's ability to gain a deeper knowledge of a problem. It is critical for people to schedule time in their schedules for introspection and to actively seek out points of connection with others.

Connect to past experiences.

Even while gender-neutral pronouns can seem like a novel idea to some, many people frequently use the singular version of they without even recognising it. Take, for example, the scenario in which a member of the staff discovers a folder that was abandoned by a colleague following a significant meeting. It is not evident who the owner of the folder is. Therefore, the staff member might ask close employees, "Does anyone know who left their folder on the table?" in order to find out who left their folder there.

When getting used to the new context of the pronoun they, it can be good to think back on previous experiences with the single form of the pronoun they.

Learn.

Find out more about transgender and gender non-conforming identities by consulting one of the many internet resources available today. (For further reading, check out the resources provided by Q+.)

Practice.

Getting the use of pronouns right can need a lot of practise and focused effort. However, in a short amount of time or maybe none at all, people can develop improved familiarity with and comfort levels when it comes to using the appropriate pronouns.

You should work on your own time. Pay attention to the pronouns that you use in your interactions as well as the way that other people use them.

Is it possible for me to understand their priorities and concerns?

Have I been in a situation that was like to this or encountered other instances in which I needed to be better acknowledged or more seen?

What feelings do I recognise in the other person that I have also gone through in my own life?

Is there anyone who can tell me whose folder was left on the table?

Application

Employers, individual leaders, and employees all stand a higher chance of succeeding in their efforts to cultivate cultures of belonging for LGBTQ+ and non-LGBTQ+ workers alike if they make use of the best practises that are outlined in this book.

Simple shifts in behaviour, determined efforts, and consistent practise can go a long way toward establishing a critical precedent of mutual respect among coworkers and encouraging employees to want to better understand and connect with people who are in their immediate environment.

Please keep in touch with us at qplus@adec-cogroup.com to share your implementation of these best practises as well as any feedback you have on this resource and/or the experience of your employer.

References

- Cilluffo, A., & Cohn, D. V. (2019, April 11). 6 demographic trends shaping the U.S. and the world in 2019. Retrieved from <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2019/04/11/6-demographic-trends-shaping-the-u-s-and-the-world-in-2019/>
- Geiger, A. W., & Graf, N. (2019, September 5). About One-in-Five U.S. Adults Know Someone Who Goes by a Gender-Neutral Pronoun. Retrieved from <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2019/09/05/gender-neutral-pronouns/>
- Gibson, S., & Fernandez, J. (2018). Gender Diversity and Non-Binary Inclusion in the Workplace: The Essential Guide for Employers. London: Jessica Kingsley.
- Herman, J. L., Brown, T. N. T., & Haas, A. P. (2019). Suicide Thoughts and Attempts Among Transgender Adults (pp. 1-36). The Williams Institute.
- Johansson, A. (2017, November 13). The One Philosophical Difference That Sets Millennials Apart In Workplace Diversity. Retrieved from <https://www.forbes.com/sites/annajohansson/2017/11/13/the-one-philosophical-difference-that-sets-millennials-apart-in-workplace-diversity/#557344cb70c7>
- Lekach, S. (2019, May 29). Lyft adds in-app pronoun choices for riders. Retrieved from <https://mashable.com/article/lyft-pride-pronoun-inclusive-ride-hailing-app/>
- Locker, M. (2019, December 10). Merriam Webster's Word of the Year 2019: "They". Retrieved from <https://time.com/5746516/merriam-webster-word-of-the-year-2019/>
- Parker, Kim, et al. "Generation Z Looks a Lot Like Millennials on Key Social and Political Issues." Pew Research Center's Social & Demographic Trends Project. Pew Research, 31 Dec. 2019. www.pewsocialtrends.org/2019/01/17/generation-z-looks-a-lot-like-millennials-on-key-social-and-political-issues/
- Sosin, K. (2020, January 7). Study: Half of Americans Now See Gender on a Spectrum. Retrieved from <http://www.newnownext.com/half-of-americans-see-gender-on-spectrum/01/2020/>
- Temkin, D., & Vega, C. (2020, April 9). Research Shows the Risk of Misgendering Transgender Youth. Retrieved from <https://www.childtrends.org/research-shows-the-risk-of-misgendering-transgender-youth>
- The Harris Poll. (2018, October 4). Americans Say Businesses Should Be Open to All and the Government Needs to Do More to Protect LGBTQ Rights. Retrieved from <https://theharrispoll.com/americans-insist-that-businesses-should-be-open-to-all-and-the-government-needs-to-do-more-to-protect-lgbtq-rights/>
- The Human Rights Campaign. (2014). The Cost of the Closet and The Rewards of Inclusion. Retrieved from https://assets2.hrc.org/files/assets/resources/Cost_of_the_Closet_May2014.pdf?_ga=2.96702365.366169234.1588866226.1752513918.1573502163
- Translations.co.uk. (2017, November 13). What are Genderless Languages? Retrieved from <https://www.translations.co.uk/genderless-languages/>



THE ADECCO GROUP

**We believe in talents
not in labels**

Qzine

Research, Editorial & Design / Founders Q+

Francesco Camillo
francesco.camillo@adecogroup.com

Brian McCabe
brian.mccabe@adecogroup.com

