

# AUTISM FOR LIFE FOUNDATION

## PERSONAL GENDER PRONOUNS:

### THE AUTISM FOR LIFE FOUNDATION - IMPORTANT STEPS IN BECOMING A TRANS ALLY

Autism for life foundation is committed to valuing and validating the gender identity and expression of members within the community. Gender identity refers to an individual's internal sense of gender, regardless of the sex assigned to them at birth or the sex designation on their legal documents. One way that autism for life foundation seeks to create gender-inclusive services, spaces, living, and work environments is by encouraging all members of the community to indicate the pronouns they use for themselves, if desired, in all spaces by encouraging all affiliates of the foundation and community to respect these pronouns.<sup>1</sup>

### WHAT IS A PRONOUN?

- o A pronoun is a word that refers to either the people talking (like I or you) or someone or something that is being talked about (like she, it, them, and this). Gender pronouns (like he and hers) specifically refer to people that you are talking about.<sup>2</sup>

### WHAT IS A "PERSONAL GENDER PRONOUN"?

- o A "personal gender pronoun" is the pronoun that a person chooses to use for themselves. For example: If Karla 's preferred pronouns are she, her, and hers, you could say "Karla ate her food because she was hungry."

### WHAT ARE SOME COMMONLY USED PERSONAL PRONOUNS?

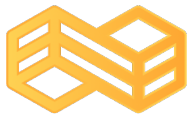
PRONOUN TABLE  
(THIS IS NOT AN EXHAUSTIVE LIST)<sup>3</sup>

Subjective	Objective	Possessive	Reflexive	Examples
She	Her	Hers	Herself	She is studying. I studied with her. The book is hers.
He	Him	His	Himself	He is studying. I studied with him. The book is his.
They	Them	Theirs	Themselves	They are studying. I studied with them. The book is theirs.
Name	Name	Name's	Name's self	Alex is studying. I studied with Alex. The book is Alex's.
Ze ("zee")	Zir ("zere")/ Hir ("here")	Zirs/Hirs	Zirself/Hirself	Ze is studying. I studied with zir. The book is zirs.

<sup>1</sup> <https://springfield.edu/gender-pronouns>

<sup>2</sup> [https://www.hampshire.edu/sites/default/files/shared\\_files/Preferred\\_Gender\\_Pronouns\\_for\\_Faculty.pdf](https://www.hampshire.edu/sites/default/files/shared_files/Preferred_Gender_Pronouns_for_Faculty.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> <https://springfield.edu/gender-pronouns>



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- o She, her, hers and he, him, his are the most commonly used pronouns. Some people call these "female/feminine" and "male/masculine" pronouns, but many avoid these labels because, for example, not everyone who uses he feels like a "male" or "masculine."

THERE ARE ALSO LOTS OF GENDER-NEUTRAL PRONOUNS IN USE HERE ARE A FEW YOU MIGHT HEAR:

GENDER-INCLUSIVE TERMS  
(THIS IS NOT AN EXHAUSTIVE LIST)<sup>4</sup>

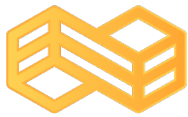
Gendered noun	Gender-inclusive noun
mankind	people, human beings, humanity
freshman	first-year student
man-made	machine-made, synthetic, artificial
chairman	chair, chairperson, coordinator, head
mailman/postman	mail carrier, letter carrier, postal worker
policeman	police officer
fireman	firefighter
salesman	salesperson, sales associate
steward, stewardess	flight attendant
waiter, waitress	server
congressman	legislator, congressional representative
boyfriend/girlfriend husband/wife	partner, spouse, significant other
mother/father	parent
sister/brother	sibling
son/daughter	child, kid

SOURCED FROM: <https://springfield.edu/gender-pronouns>

- o They, them, theirs ("Karla ate their food because they were hungry".) This is the most common gender-neutral pronoun.... And yes "they" can in fact be used in the singular.
- o Ze, hir ("Karla ate hir food because ze was hungry".) This has not been used frequently, at least at CCSU, but there may be individuals who chose "ze" as their pronoun. Ze is pronounced like "zee" and can also be spelled zie or xe and replaces she/he/they. Hir is pronounced like "here" and replaces her/ hers/ him/his/ they/ theirs.
- o Just my name please! ("Karla ate Karla 's food because Karla was hungry.") Again, not common, but some people prefer not to use pronouns at all, using their name as a pronoun instead.

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<sup>4</sup> <https://springfield.edu/gender-pronouns>



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- Never, ever refer to a person as “it” or “he-she” (unless they specifically ask you to.) These are offensive and dehumanizing slurs used against trans and gender non-conforming individuals.

## WHY IS IT REALLY IMPORTANT TO RESPECT PEOPLE'S PGPS?

- You can't always know what someone's PGP is by looking at them.
- Asking and correctly using someone's preferred pronoun is one of the most basic ways to show your respect for their gender identity.
- When someone is referred to with the wrong pronoun, it can make them feel disrespected, invalidated, dismissed, alienated, or dysphoric (or, often, or all of the above.)
- It is a privilege to not have to worry about which pronoun someone is going to use for you based on how they perceive your gender. If you have this privilege, yet fail to respect someone else's gender identity, it is not only disrespectful and hurtful, but also oppressive.

## WHY IS IT REALLY IMPORTANT TO RESPECT YOUR STUDENTS' PGPS AS AUTISM FOR LIFE FOUNDATION MEMBERS, EMPLOYEES, VOLUNTEERS, AND CONTRACTORS

### AS AUTISM FOR LIFE FOUNDATION MEMBERS, EMPLOYEES, VOLUNTEERS, AND CONTRACTORS, YOU ARE OFTEN IN A POSITION OF POWER.

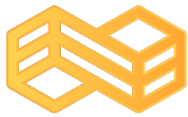
- Asking your peers what their personal pronouns are and consistently using them correctly can determine within the first few minutes if they will feel respected at AFLF or not.
- You will be setting an example for your community: If you are consistent about using someone's personal pronouns, they will follow your example.
- Many of your peers will be learning about PGPs for the first time, so this will be a learning opportunity for them that they will keep forever.
- Discussing and correctly using PGPs sets a tone of respect and allyship that trans and gender non-conforming peers do not take for granted. It can truly make all of the difference, especially for incoming first-year peers that may feel particularly vulnerable, friendless, and scared.

### How do I ask someone what their PGP is?

- Try asking: "What are your personal pronouns?" or just "Which are your pronouns?" If you forget, ask: "Can you remind me which pronouns you use?" It can feel awkward at first, but it is not half as awkward as getting it wrong or making a hurtful assumption.
- If you are asking as part of an introduction exercise and you want to quickly explain what a PGP is, you can try something like this: "Tell us your name, where you come from, and the pronouns you use."

### What if I make a mistake?

- It's okay! Everyone slips up from time to time. The best thing to do if you use the wrong pronoun for someone is to say something right away, like "Sorry, I meant she." If you realize your mistake after the fact, apologize in private and move on.
- It can be tempting to go on and on about how bad you feel that you misgendered someone. But please, don't! It is inappropriate and makes the person who was misgendered feel awkward and responsible for comforting you, which is absolutely not their job. It is your job to remember people's PGPs.



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## HOW CAN FACULTY TAKE AN ACTIVE ROLE?

- Within the community you may hear one of your community members using the wrong pronoun for someone. In most cases, it is appropriate to gently correct them without further embarrassing the individual who has been mis-gendered. This means saying something like "Actually, Karla prefers the pronoun she," and then moving on. If other students or faculty are consistently using the wrong pronouns for someone, do not ignore it! It is important to let your student know that you are their ally.
- It may be appropriate to approach them and say something like, "I noticed that you were getting referred to with the wrong pronoun earlier, and I know that that can be really hurtful. Would you be okay with me taking them aside and reminding them about your preferred pronoun? I want to make sure that this group is a safe space for you." Follow up, if necessary, but take your cues from the comfort level of your student. Your actions will be greatly appreciated.

BASED ON MATERIALS WRITTEN BY MATEO MEDINA FOR HAMPSHIRE COLLEGE<sup>56</sup> BE AN ALLY & STAY INFORMED:

- Resources On Personal Pronouns: <https://pronouns.org>
- Practice With Pronouns: [https://www.practicewithpronouns.com/#/?\\_k=s7qxa7](https://www.practicewithpronouns.com/#/?_k=s7qxa7)
- Sharing Your Pronouns: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fb\\_We13\\_QTA&feature=youtu.be](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fb_We13_QTA&feature=youtu.be)
- Pronouns Tutorial: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M8y5KQi7B1M>
- International Pronouns Day: <https://pronouns.org/day>

ACCORDING TO THE FREE DICTIONARY... THERE ARE MORE THAN 100 PRONOUNS & HERES THE FULL LIST...

## WHAT IS A PRONOUN?

Pronouns are some of the most useful words in the English language. They are used in the place of a noun to avoid it having to be named twice. For example: Suzy threw the boomerang and it came back to her. In this sentence, "it" is a pronoun that represents the boomerang, and "her" is a pronoun that refers to Suzy. Without pronouns, we'd have to say Suzy threw the boomerang and the boomerang came back to Suzy. Without pronouns, how would we even say "we"?

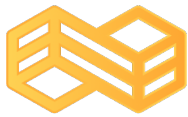
## DEFINITION OF PRONOUN

In English, the part of speech used as a substitute for an antecedent noun that is clearly understood, and with which it agrees in person, number, and gender. Pronouns are classified as personal (I, we, you, he, she, it, they), demonstrative (this, these, that, those), relative (who, which, that, as), indefinite (each, all, everyone, either, one, both, any, such, somebody), interrogative (who, which, what), reflexive (myself, herself), possessive (mine, yours, his, hers, theirs). There are also pronominal adjectives, sometimes called possessive adjectives (my, your, his, her, our, their).

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<sup>5</sup> <https://www.linkedin.com/in/mateo-medina-42a45871/>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.linkedin.com/company/tapestry-health/>



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- PERSONAL PRONOUNS / SUBJECT PRONOUNS: You already know subject pronouns, even if you didn't know that's what they were called. Subject pronouns are used to replace the subject in a sentence. You might also see them called "personal" pronouns, as they designate the person speaking (I, me, we, us), the person spoken to (you), or the person or thing spoken about (he, she, it, they, him, her, them). The following commonly used words are subject pronouns:

I      we      you (singular and plural)  
he      she                      it  
they

#### PERSONAL PRONOUN EXAMPLES:

I will be leaving soon.                      You are welcome.  
She is the new teacher.                      He speaks three languages.  
They are very friendly neighbors.

- OBJECT PRONOUNS: Object pronouns are used as the object of a verb or a preposition.

me      us      you (singular and plural)  
her      him      it  
them

#### OBJECT PRONOUN EXAMPLES:

They offered me a ride. ("Me" is the object of the verb "offered.")                      This letter is addressed to me. ("Me" is the object of the preposition "to.")  
They gave us free tickets to the show. ("Us" is the object of the verb "gave.")

- POSSESSIVE PRONOUNS: A possessive pronoun designates ownership and can substitute for noun phrases.

mine                                      ours  
yours (singular and plural)      hers  
his    theirs

#### POSSESSIVE PRONOUN EXAMPLES:

The green gloves are mine.      That cat is hers.  
The red house is theirs.

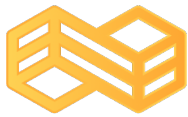
- POSSESSIVE ADJECTIVES / PRONOMINAL ADJECTIVES: "Pronominal" describes something that resembles a pronoun, as by specifying a person, place, or thing, while functioning primarily as another part of speech. A pronominal adjective is an adjective that resembles a pronoun. "Her" in "her car" is a pronominal adjective.

#### POSSESSIVE ADJECTIVE EXAMPLES:

my      our  
your      her  
his      their

- REFLEXIVE PRONOUNS: Reflexive pronouns might be the easiest group to remember because they all have one thing in common: the ending "self" or "selves." That is because reflexive pronouns show how the actions of an aforementioned person or group affects him or her (or them).

myself              yourself              herself  
himself              itself                      ourselves



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yourselves themselves

## REFLEXIVE PRONOUN EXAMPLES:

I bought myself a new car.                      That man thinks a great deal of himself.  
We may be deceiving ourselves.

- o INTENSIVE PRONOUNS: Intensive and reflexive pronouns are actually the exact same words (ending with "self" or "selves"), but they function differently in a sentence. Intensive pronouns not only refer back to a previously mentioned person or people, but they also emphasize. As their name suggests, they intensify.

myself              yourself              herself  
himself            itself                  ourselves  
yourselves        themselves

## INTENSIVE PRONOUN EXAMPLES:

I myself was certain of the facts.                      The trouble is in the machine itself.  
The cooks themselves eat after all the guests have finished.

- o INDEFINITE PRONOUNS: As the word "indefinite" suggests, these pronouns do not specify the identity of their referents. They are more vague than other pronouns.

all              another              any              anybody              anyone              anything  
both            each                  either            everybody            everyone            everything  
few            many                  most            neither            nobody            none  
no one        nothing              one            other            others            several  
some        somebody            someone        something        such

## INDEFINITE PRONOUNS EXAMPLES:

Both were candidates.                      No one is home.  
Several of the workers went home sick.

- o DEMONSTRATIVE PRONOUNS: Demonstrative pronouns specify a particular person or thing.

such            that  
these        this  
those

## DEMONSTRATIVE PRONOUNS EXAMPLES:

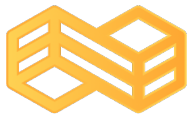
I don't much care for these.              Who's that?  
Such are the fortunes of war.

- o INTERROGATIVE PRONOUNS: This group of pronouns question which individual referent or referents are intended by the rest of the sentence.

what            whatever            which  
whichever    who                  whoever  
whom            whomever           whose

## INTERROGATIVE PRONOUN EXAMPLES:

Who left?                      Which of these is yours?  
Do whatever you please.



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RELATIVE PRONOUNS: Relative pronouns introduce a dependent clause and refer to an antecedent (simply the word or phrase to which a pronoun refers). For instance, who in the child who is wearing a hat or that in the house that you live in

as	that	what
whatever	which	whichever
who	whoever	whom
whomever	whose	

### RELATIVE PRONOUN EXAMPLES:

The car that has a flat tire needs to be towed.  
Do whatever you like.

The visitor who came yesterday left his phone number.

- o ARCHAIC PRONOUNS: There are several pronouns that have fallen out of common usage but appear frequently in older texts, so there is still a good chance that you will encounter them. "Thee" is an old word for "you" used only when addressing one person, while "thy" is an old word for "your." "Thine" indicates the one or ones belonging to thee.

thou	thee
thy	thine
ye	

### ARCHAIC PRONOUN EXAMPLES:

Thou shalt not kill.	With this ring, I thee wed.
Thy name is more hateful than thy face.	To thine own self be true.

### LIST OF ALL PRONOUNS<sup>7</sup>

#### A FULL LIST OF EVERY WORD THAT CAN BE CONSIDERED A PRONOUN OR PRONOMINAL ADJECTIVE:

all	another	any	anybody	anyone	anything	as	aught	both	each	each other
either	enough	everybody	everyone	everything	few	he	her	hers	herself	him
himself	his	I	idem	it	its	itself	many	me	mine	most
my	myself	naught	neither	no one	nobody	none	nothing	nought	one	one another
other	others	ought	our	ours	ourself	ourselves	several	she	some	somebody
someone	something	somewhat	such	suchlike	that	thee	their	theirs	theirself	theirselves
them	themself	themselves	there	these	they	thine	this	those	thou	thy
thyslf	us	we	what	whatever	whatnot	whatsoever	whence	where	whereby	wherefrom
wherein	whereinto	whereof	whereon	wherever	wheresoever	whereto	whereunto	wherewith	wherewithal	whether
which	whichever	whichever	who	whoever	whom	whomever	whomso	whomsoever	whose	whoever
whossoever	whoso	whossoever	ye	yon	yonder	you	your	yours	yourself	yourselves

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.thefreedictionary.com/List-of-pronouns.htm>