

Why is Funders Together asking what your pronouns are?

One way we can create safe spaces and act as allies to our LGBTQ colleagues is to ask for people's pronouns at in-person gatherings. Our culture often assumes that we can guess someone's pronouns based off their visual appearance, however, this is not the case, and we can cause harm and affect someone's sense of safety when we refer to them using the wrong pronouns.

Sex and gender are frequently used interchangeably, but in fact, these words have different meanings. When born, babies are given their sex assigned at birth based on the doctor's interpretation of their genitals. However, not everyone identifies with their sex assigned at birth. While we are taught that gender is binary, gender exists on a spectrum. There are many genders someone might identify with and their gender identity might not be obvious from their appearance.

When we ask for pronouns, we signal that we understand and respect gender identity, and make it clear that we want others to feel safe and seen. In our field (and we would argue in all spaces), asking for the pronouns of colleagues, grantees and clients is one way we can create more inclusive, safe spaces for others. True Colors United highlights why pronouns matter in homelessness services: "When young people are welcome and accepted for who they are, they're more likely to succeed and less likely to experience negative outcomes like homelessness."

Singular They/Them

While you may not have encountered *they* as a singular pronoun, *they* has been used as a singular pronoun since the late 1300s. As language shifted, it became common to use *they* in its plural form, however, it can still be used as a singular, gender-neutral pronoun. *They* is the pronoun of many gender non-conforming and non-binary people.

To learn more about gender identity visit:

<https://truecolorsunited.org/our-work/training-education/network/>

or scan this QR Code:



10 Things You're Actually Saying When You Ignore Someone's Gender Pronouns

1. I know you better than you know yourself.
2. I would rather hurt you repeatedly than change the way I speak about you.
3. Your sense of safety is not important to me.
4. Your identity isn't real and shouldn't be acknowledged.
5. I want to teach everyone around me to disrespect you.
6. Offending you is fine if it makes me feel more comfortable.
7. I can hear you talking, but I'm not really listening.
8. Being who you truly are is an inconvenience to me.
9. I would prefer it if you stopped being honest with me.
10. I am not an ally, a friend, or someone you can trust.