Let's talk about



What are Pronouns?

Pronoun: any of a small set of words in a language that are used as substitutes for nouns or noun phrases and whose referents are named or understood in the context - Merriam-Webster Dictionary

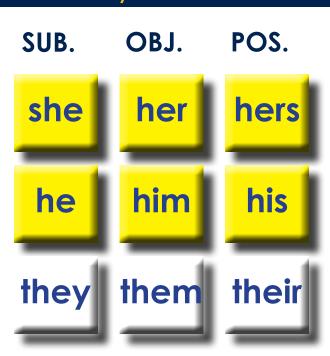
Why are Pronouns important?

As the definition demonstrates, pronouns provide understanding and context when speaking to others. Many also see pronouns as a label, and to use the correct pronouns when addressing someone shows respect. Neglecting to use someone's preferred pronouns can make that person feel disrespected, invalidated, dismissed, and alienated.

How do I use pronouns inclusively?

Pronouns often carry a categorization of gender. You might have heard these referred to as "masculine" and "feminine" pronouns such as: she/her/hers & he/him/his.

Many people do not identify as strictly masculine or feminine and it is best not to assume that you know someone's gender identity. Thus we need gender-inclusive pronouns such as: they/them/their.



WAIT! There's more!

In addition to they/them/their, there are many other gender-inclusive pronouns out there! Here are a few that you might hear... zie zir zirs sie hir hirs ey em eirs

Tips!

- Introduce your pronouns first when meeting someone for the first time. Putting yourself out there will allow others to feel comfortable to do the same.
- Do not assume you know someone's gender identity and pronouns if you have never met them use they/ them/their or preferred name until you have gained their rapport and preferred pronouns are given to you. Remember it is a privilege to not have to worry about what pronouns someone will use for you and not everyone shares that privilege.
- You might be asking yourself "What if I make a mistake?" We all slip up sometimes. The best thing to do if you use the incorrect pronouns is to apologize and use the correct pronouns moving forward. Try not to make a big deal or bring extra attention to the situation.
- Attend an Inclusive Language Workshop to learn more about the importance of inclusive language and the intersections and impacts of words across various identities within the NAU community. Register through LOUIE > Self Service > Learning and Development.



Questions? Contact us! Inclusion@nau.edu

