

The Importance Names & Pronouns

A guide to why they matter and how they make a difference.

Why Names & Pronouns Matter

- Using someone's chosen name is a sign of respect and a way to build a relationship with someone. We often use people's chosen names instead of their given/legal name, for example using someone's nickname or middle name.
- We most often assign a person a pronoun based on their gender expression and assume we know who they are. It is better to ask people what pronouns they use.
- Our names are a reflection of our identity including but not limited to our gender, our faith, our race, and our culture.
- Pronouns in the English language denote gender, and using the incorrect pronoun is considered "misgendering" someone, or not respecting their gender identity.
- Our names and pronouns represent who we are and should be respected.

Quick Pronoun Use Guide*

Subject	Object	Possessive	Possessive Pronoun	Reflexive
He	Him	His	His	Himself
She	Her	Her	Hers	Herself
They	Them	Their	Theirs	Themselves
Ze	Hir	Hir	Hirs	Hirself

*please note this is not an exhaustive list of pronouns people use, but rather the most common we are currently seeing.

Examples of Using Pronouns

- Someone left **their** cell phone in my office, I hope **they** come back to get it soon.
- I'm excited to welcome Taylor to our team, **ze** joins us from our Atlanta branch where **ze** made a name for **hirself** with new innovative approaches.
- Chris is a graduate of VCU where **they** studied computer science. **They** is currently teaching English over at TJ.

What To Do If You Make a Mistake

Everyone makes mistakes! Apologize, try to fix it, and move on! The important thing is to not only apologize when you make a mistake, but work to change your behavior so the mistake does not continue. So when you misgender someone or use the wrong name, be sure to apologize and work to ensure it does not continue to happen.

Using a Legal Name vs. Chosen Name

There are times when you are required to use someone's legal name. This is solely on legal documents, including but not limited to:

- Employment record
- Tax documents (including W-2)
- Official school transcripts
- Medical record and insurance forms
- Legal ID (driver's license, passport)

Here are some examples of documents that are **NOT** legal documents that you can use a chosen name on, but often get confused as legal documents:

- Employee or School ID cards or badges
- Diplomas, class rosters, athletic rosters
- Name within employee or student system (example: intranet or "Bannerweb")
- Email addresses and business cards
- Listing in work or school directories