

THE IMPORTANCE OF PRONOUNS

At Samuel Dixon Family Health Center, Inc. we aim to provide inclusive, culturally attuned, and accessible care for the LGBTQIA-2S community. At our agency, we work to not make assumptions about people's gender identity— and rather, create a curious, inclusive space by asking people what their pronouns are.

What are pronouns?

Pronouns are words that refer to either the person talking (you or I) or the person being talked about (he, she, they or them).

Why are gender pronouns important?

Using someone's correct pronouns is a simple way to show that you respect their gender identity. It is important NOT to assume someone's pronouns based on how they present or look, but rather ask them what their pronouns are.

Mistaking someone's pronouns or assuming one's pronouns can send a message of non-inclusivity and can be harmful. It can make someone feel alienated, unwelcome or invalidated.

Ways to be inclusive and respectful of gender identity

Incorporate asking people's pronouns during introductions, or meetings. Some ways to ask:

- "What pronouns do you use?"
- "How would you like me to refer to you?"
- "Can you remind me which pronouns you like to use for yourself?"
- "My name is X and my pronouns are they/them/theirs, what about you?"

People's pronouns may change over time, so it is important to make asking pronouns a consistent practice.

People may choose to use a variety of pronouns. For example, people may use BOTH he/him/his and they/them/theirs pronouns. Here is a list of common pronouns and how to use them:

Gender Pronouns				
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.

"Many transgender, gender expansive, and intersex people delay or decline to seek care due to discrimination in health care settings, and those patients who have had to teach their providers about transgender people are far more likely to delay seeking care. This has clear implications for these patients' health outcomes, and providers appropriately referring to their transgender and intersex patients is a critical first step in making them feel comfortable and welcome in the clinic."

Source:
Jaffee K, Shires D, Stroumsa D. Discrimination and Delayed Health Care Among Transgender Women and Men: Implications for Improving Medical Education and Health Care Delivery. *Medical Care*. 2016;54(11):1010-1016.