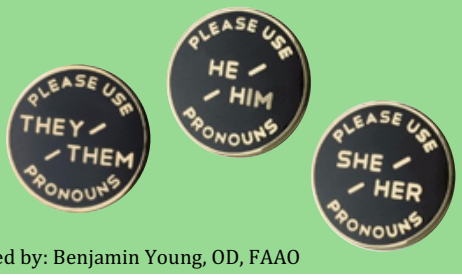
Queer Quarterly vol. 2 (2021)



Pronouns

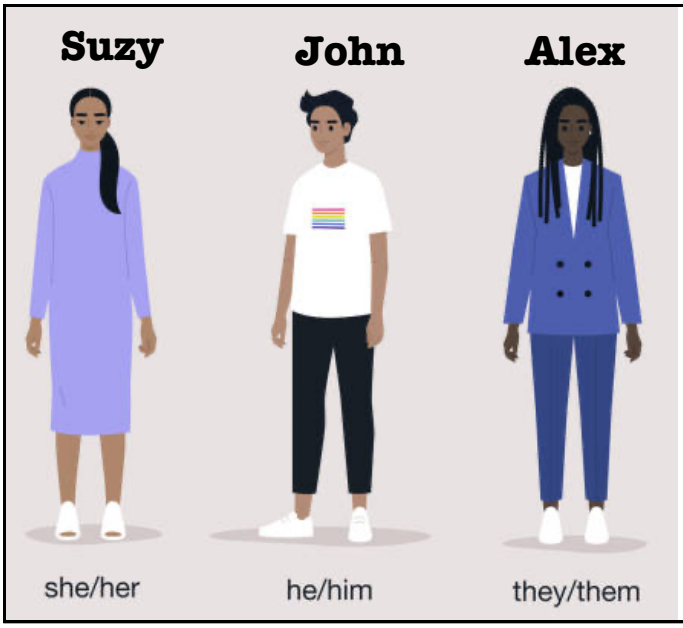
PRISM
New England College of Optometry

Edited by: Benjamin Young, OD, FAAO

Binary vs. Non-Binary

By: Brian Bouchard

Pronouns such as “he/him” or “she/her” are often used to describe people that identify as a man or woman respectively, but there are many people who do not identify as either; these individuals often identify as “Non-binary” and may use “they/them” pronouns. They/Them pronouns are conjugated normally, but still refer to a singular person. Consider the example below:



Suzy and Alex are going to the movies tomorrow, so we would say “She (Suzy) is going to the movies with them (Alex).”

John wants to join Suzy and Alex, so we would say, “He (John) wants to go with them (Suzy and Alex) to the movies.”

You’ll notice that we use the pronoun them to refer to the singular Alex as well as the plural for both Alex and Suzy. This may seem confusing at first, but over time it becomes easier after you get more acquainted with non-binary people.

Since 1.2 million people in the U.S. identify as non-binary, you are likely to encounter a non-binary patient as an optometrist. People who are non-binary are not to be confused with people who are transgender, although some non-binary people identify as transgender. Transgender (or trans for short) is an umbrella term for people whose gender identity and/or expression is different from cultural expectations based on the sex they were assigned at birth. Being transgender does not imply any specific sexual orientation. Therefore, transgender people may identify as straight, gay, lesbian, bisexual, etc.[1]



The non-binary pride flag

1. Definition of transgender from the Human Rights Campaign via hrc.org/resources

Pronouns are not 'Preferred'

By: Chrys Stevens



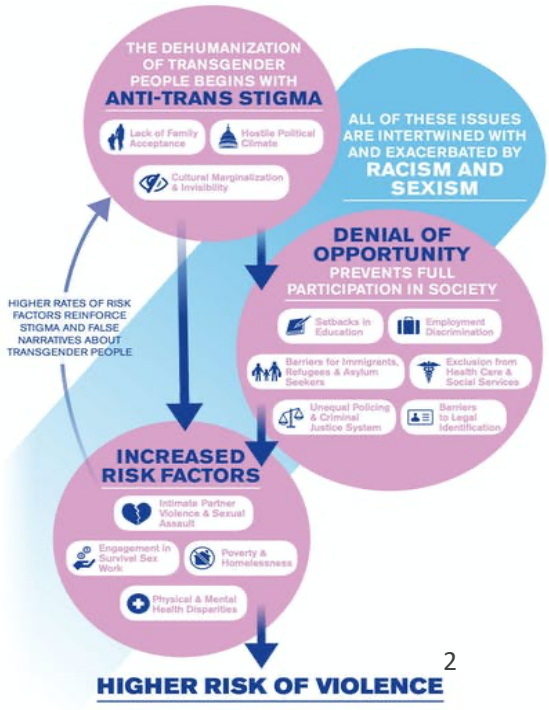
You may be familiar with the term "preferred pronouns" when hearing discussions on gender in the workplace, classroom, or clinic. However, there has been a major shift towards simply sharing "pronouns" and forgoing the use of preferred altogether; the reason for omitting the word preferred is because it implies that gender is a choice and may be interpreted as the pronoun is optional when, in fact, it's the pronoun that should be used. Pronouns are not merely a preference or a gesture of politeness, they are an integral part of identity.

Some may argue that picking at the implications of terms is pedantic and a distraction from more important issues, but language is in fact pivotal in making our community a more welcoming and safer place for gender non-conforming people. The switch from "preferred pronouns" to "pronouns" is reminiscent of the switch from "sexual preference" to "sexual orientation," as preference implies that sexuality is a choice, and those who oppose LGBTQ+ rights use this language to argue against workplace discrimination projections and marriage equality. It is only natural that language evolves over time to become more inclusive, and it is our responsibility to adapt to these changes.

Staggering Statistics

If you believe pronouns and gender identity are not significant issues, consider the facts below[3]:

- 29% of transgender adults live in poverty
- Only 30% of women's shelters are willing to house transgender women
- 55% of trans adults of color said they were unable to vote in an election due to fear of experiencing discrimination at the polls
- 94% of non-binary individuals have considered suicide
- There were 44 trans or gender non-conforming individuals that were violently killed in 2020. Sadly, this number is already higher in 2021.



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2. Graphic from the Human Rights Campaign via reports.hrc.org
3. Statistics from the Williams Institute via williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu

Call to Action



Add pronouns to your Email signature!

By: Meredith Alfred

If you are a cisgender person (meaning your gender identity aligns with the sex you were assigned at birth), you may be thinking, "Why should I bother adding my pronouns into my email signature?" or "This doesn't apply to me". However, we argue that participating in this movement is an important step in creating an inclusive environment for transgender, non-binary, and gender non-conforming people because doing so:

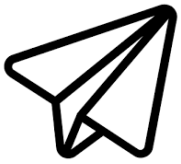
- Normalizes the act of sharing pronouns
- Makes it clear how you and those around you should be referred to
- Signals that you are committed to respecting all gender identities and expressions
- Opens the floor for a discussion about gender and identity

As an organization, we want to recognize and respect those who may be questioning their gender and are not yet comfortable sharing their pronouns in their email signature. However, we also want to urge those who are comfortable to take this step in creating an inclusive space in the NECO community and beyond.

E-Mail



By: Parker Ayer





The pronouns you include in your email signature should accurately represent your personal gender identity and demonstrate your respect for those whose gender identity may be marginalized.

- Don't know how to do it? See the examples here ---------->

There's no standard format for sharing your pronouns in your email signature, but we recommend keeping them clear and concise without too many colors or font changes.

Sam Smith
they/them
Doctor of Optometry Candidate, 2023
New England College of Optometry

Halsey (she/they)
New England College of Optometry
Class of 2024

Lil Nas X, OD
Pronouns: He/Him/His
Assistant Professor of Optometry
New England College of Optometry

You can set up an automatic email signature in your NECO Gmail account. To set up an email signature, click on the settings icon in the top right corner of your browser. Under general settings, scroll down until you find Signature. Click on "+ Create new". Enter a name for your new signature. Once you enter a name, type the email signature in the text box.