

GENDER 101:

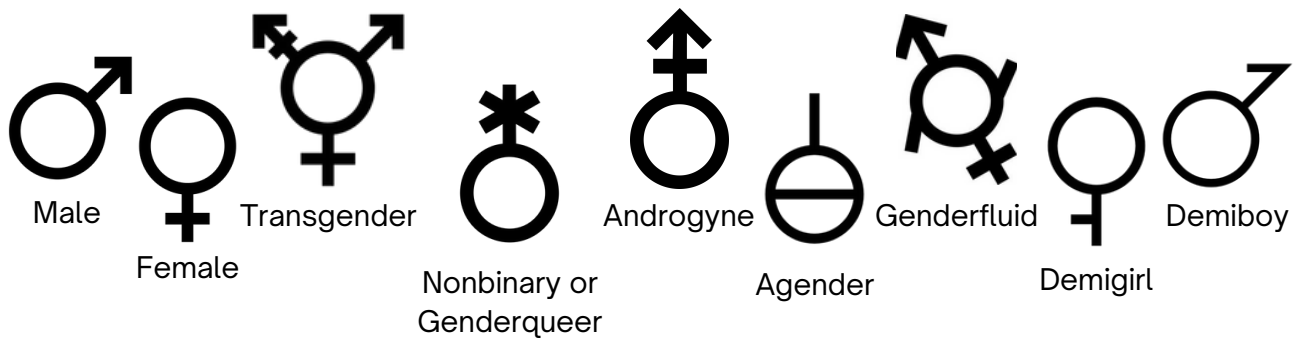
HOW TO AVOIDING MISGENDERING AND DEADNAMING

What is a pronoun?

A **pronoun** is a word that is used in the place of a noun (person, place or thing).

What is gender?

Gender is how a person sees themselves in the world. When someone's gender lines up with how they were assigned at birth, they are **cisgender**. When a person's gender is different from what they were assigned at birth, they are **transgender** or **gender non-conforming**. Genders include a person, a woman, a man, both a man and a woman, or neither a man or a woman. There are an infinite number of genders - some of the most common gender identities are listed below, with their accompanying symbols.



How do pronouns connect to gender?

Pronouns are a way to describe someone's gender.

Are there more than two pronouns to describe a person's gender?

Yes, there are many pronouns available. Some include:

She/Her/Hers

Ze/Zir/Zirs

They/Them/Theirs

Xe/Xem/Xyr

He/Him/His

It/Its/Itself

Some people use multiple sets of pronouns. These are called **rolling pronouns** and may be used interchangeably within a sentence, or may be used depending on how someone expresses their gender.

Example: Roman uses *they/them/theirs* and *he/him/his* pronouns. Roman got a perfect score on *their* math test and is proud of *himself*.

Neopronouns are pronouns that have been newly created to describe someone in a gender neutral way. *Ze/zir/zirs* and *xe/xem/xyr* are two examples of neopronoun sets.

Example: Aubree uses *xe/xem/xyr* pronouns. Aubree's favorite holiday is Halloween because *xe* gets to dress up as *xyr* favorite superheroes.

What is misgendering?

Misgendering is the act of using the wrong pronouns when talking to or about someone.

Example: Susie uses *he/him/his* pronouns. You would misgender him by saying, "Susie is such a great knitter; *she* knows so much." Saying "Susie is such a great knitter; *he* knows so much" uses Susie's correct pronouns.

What if I don't know a person's pronouns?

Often, misgendering happens by accident. When we meet a new person, sometimes we don't know their pronouns. It's wise to never assume pronouns based on appearance. If you don't know someone's pronouns when speaking about them or to them, use their name in place of pronouns.

If you want to know someone's pronouns, do not ask them directly - it can be unsafe for transgender people to have their pronouns questioned. Instead, introduce yourself and give your pronouns. This can create trust between you both, and the person may share their pronouns in return. If they do not, go back to step one and use their name.

What is deadnaming?

Deadnaming is the act of calling a transgender person by an incorrect name. Often, this is a name they were given at birth and no longer use.

How do I avoid deadnaming a person?

In order to not deadname someone, you need to know their current name and commit to using it. Sometimes, you can find this information out because a person will tell you as part of introducing themselves. Other times, a friend, family member, or coworker may tell you their name, or it will be on their social media.

When you know someone's correct name, make sure to use it even when describing past events or stories about the person. It is never okay or necessary to use the person's deadname.

Sometimes, trans youth will change their name several times. This is done because they are trying to figure out what name feels right. Someone might have a different name every time you see them. This is okay and should be respected.

What do I do if I accidentally misgender or deadname someone?

It is important to always give a quick apology and correct yourself if you catch your mistake.

If you or someone else realizes you misgendered someone after the moment, you can work to not do it in the future, promise to catch yourself if you misgender in the future, or give a quick apology and recognition to the person you misgendered.

There is no need to make excuses or give long apologies.

How important is it to use a person's correct pronouns and name?

Several studies show that when you use someone's correct pronouns and name, it drastically decreases that person's thoughts of suicide, depression and anxiety. This is especially true for transgender youth.

What if I don't want to use the person's correct pronouns or name?

How would you feel if someone constantly called you the wrong name and refused to change? Misgendering and deadnaming someone without correcting is disrespectful and harmful. It can make trans people feel dysphoric - or even result in unsafe experiences, such as exposing them to anti-trans violence.

If you decide you do not want to use someone's correct name or pronouns, you should avoid talking about or spending time with them to avoid continually harming them. You should not explain to someone why you've made this decision. Explaining why you won't use someone's name or pronouns shows that you've chosen to invalidate their identity, and is an act of violence.

I still have trouble understanding the importance of misgendering and deadnaming.

What should I do to be a better ally?

You might not understand the importance of pronouns and chosen names because you haven't personally had the experience of having your name or pronouns invalidated.

To be a better ally, you should first educate yourself. You can learn more about deadnaming and misgendering by researching them online, reading books or articles, taking training courses and speaking to cisgender people who have a better understanding.

Never ask a transgender person about misgendering, deadnaming and being trans unprompted. If they trust you to talk about those topics, they will bring those topics up to you.

What are other ways I can show I am an ally to transgender and gender non-conforming people?

- Add your pronouns in your email signature and on your social media accounts to take the weight off trans and gender nonconforming people when it comes to sharing pronouns.
- When you see someone being deadnamed or misgendered, privately speak to the person who has done the deadnaming or misgendering and teach them how to do better next time.
- Directly support transgender and gender non-conforming people: give money to individual fundraisers and support organizations that are led by and support trans and queer people.
- Read books and articles written by transgender and gender non-conforming people.
- Post information on social media for others to learn.
- Speak to your workplace's Operations or Human Resources staff about implementing safe trainings and practices for all employees.
- Always listen to transgender and gender non-conforming people when they trust you enough to tell you about injustices they face.
- Take accountability for mistakes or thoughts you may have had in the past regarding transgender and gender non-conforming people and the LGBTQ+ community at large.

Learn More About Uplift's Queer and Trans Youth Services

Uplift's **Philly HopeLine** is a free, confidential helpline staffed by our Master's level clinicians. The Philly HopeLine is open to all youth and caregivers in the Philadelphia region. Call if you'd like to sign up for grief groups, receive emotional or grief support, identify community resources, get on the list for an in-school grief group, make a referral of a youth or family, or request a training. Interpretation service is available for more than 100 languages. Dial **833-PHL-HOPE (833-745-4673)** to speak to an Uplift clinician Monday - Thursday from 10 AM - 4 PM.

A tip sheet from

Uplift Center for Grieving Children

Office: 267-437-3123

Philly HopeLine: 833-745-4673

www.UpliftPhilly.org

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