

# Welcoming Transgender Customers and Colleagues

## Welcoming Language: Pronouns

To create a welcoming environment for transgender customers and colleagues, practice using preferred pronouns where appropriate. Here are a few of the most common.

SUBJECTIVE	OBJECTIVE	POSSESSIVE	REFLECTIVE	EXAMPLES
She	Her	Hers	Herself	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• She needs a library card.</li><li>• Could you show her the DVD section?</li><li>• This book is hers.</li><li>• She's doing it all by herself!</li></ul>
He	Him	His	Himself	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• He needs a library card.</li><li>• Could you show him the DVD section?</li><li>• This book is his.</li><li>• He's doing it all by himself!</li></ul>
They (Honorific: Mx.)	Them	Theirs	Themselves	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• They need a library card.</li><li>• Could you show them the DVD section?</li><li>• This book is theirs.</li><li>• They're doing it all by themselves!</li></ul>
Ze (Honorific: Mx.)	Hir/Zir	Hirs/Zirs	Hirself/Zirself	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ze needs a library card.</li><li>• Could you show zir the DVD section?</li><li>• This book is zirs.</li><li>• They're doing it by zirself!</li></ul>

These pronouns are not all inclusive, rather the current most popular pronouns. Pronouns are from Trans Student Educational Resources, with minor alterations. The resource is available at [www.transstudent.org/pronouns101](http://www.transstudent.org/pronouns101).



# Welcoming Transgender Customers and Colleagues

## Welcoming Language

To create a welcoming environment for transgender customers and colleagues, practice using respectful language to describe transgender people, communities, and experiences. Please keep in mind, while these are popular accepted terms and guidelines, individuals may have different preferences.

PREFERRED	EXAMPLES	PROBLEMATIC/DON'T USE
"transgender people," "a transgender person" "trans men," "trans women"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Transgender people are becoming more widely represented in fiction.</li><li>• YA author Juno Dawson is a transgender woman.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>"transgenders," "a transgender"</b></li><li>• "Transgender" is not a noun, it's an adjective.</li></ul>
"transgender" or "trans"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• This TV show has transgender characters.</li><li>• This author is trans.</li><li>• Trans children are welcome at the library.</li><li>• Transgender Coloradans are eligible for library cards.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>"Transgendered"</b></li><li>• Only adjectives derived from nouns or verbs end in "ed." The adjective "transgender" is not derived from a noun or verb.</li></ul>
"being transgender," "transgender community," "movement for transgender equality"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The transgender community is diverse.</li><li>• In her free time, my colleague speaks about her experience as a woman who is transgender.</li><li>• The movement for transgender equality has become more</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>"Transgenderism"</b></li><li>• This is not a term commonly used by transgender people. This is a term typically used by anti-transgender activists.</li></ul>
transitioning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• My coworker is transitioning and it's important to use his pronouns.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Transgendering</b>—this is not a real word.</li></ul>

This information is adapted from the *GLAAD Media Reference Guide* and *Gender Grammar* from Trans Student Educational Resources. These resources are available at [www.glaad.org/reference/transgender](http://www.glaad.org/reference/transgender) and [www.transstudent.org/gendergrammar](http://www.transstudent.org/gendergrammar).

PREFERRED	EXAMPLES	PROBLEMATIC/DON'T USE
<p><b>"transition"</b> (or transitioned/transitioning)</p> <p><b>"Gender affirmation surgery"</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If an employee begins a transition, it's important that they have the choice of when and how to come out to colleagues.</li> <li>• If a background check reveals that a new hire has transitioned, the best practice is to keep this confidential.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>"sex change," "pre-operative," "post-operative,"</b></li> <li>• Medical transition doesn't cause someone to "change genders," but instead is a medical way of changing physical characteristics to match/ make visible the inner gender identity that has been constant all along.</li> </ul>
<p><b>"assigned male at birth,"</b>  <b>"assigned female at birth"</b> or  <b>"designated male at birth,"</b>  <b>"designated female at birth,"</b>  <b>"assigned sex at birth"</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Speculating about someone's assigned sex at birth is impolite.</li> <li>• The HR department keeps employees' assigned sex at birth confidential.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>"biologically male," "biologically female," "genetically male," "genetically female," "born a man," "born a woman"</b></li> </ul>
<p>Not Using 'identifies as' when speaking about someone's gender.</p> <p>No Preferred</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Marisol is a woman.</li> <li>• It is up to the individual whether or not they want to include that are trans.</li> </ul> <p>Not Applicable</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Avoid 'identifies as'</b></li> <li>• Don't say "Marisol identifies as a woman"</li> </ul> <p><b>"passing" and "stealth"</b> Passing refers to a transgender person's ability to go through daily life without others making an assumption that they are transgender. However, the terms themselves are problematic because "passing" implies "passing as something you're not." Additionally, 'passing' should not be a qualifier to having one's gender recognized. Stealth refers to transgender people living as their authentic selves, and are not perceived as transgender by others. It's negative as it implies someone is deceptive or misleading.</p>