



How we behave in the workplace and in the world at large matters. The manner in which we engage with each other as individuals and as a firm impacts both the social and business environments of which we are a part. At Walsworth, we endeavor to focus on inclusivity and diversity – with each other, our clients, and our communities. This goal is not only good for business, but it also helps to enhance us and the world around us. As one small step in moving toward a more supportive and inclusive environment, our employees now have the option of incorporating personal pronouns on their business cards and in their e-mail signatures. These simple words are intended to highlight the importance of acknowledging and validating each person's gender identity.

While the current national narrative of trans\*<sup>1</sup> issues tends to focus on pronouns, restrooms, and participation in sports, many other issues impact the health and survival of trans\* individuals and communities. These issues range from high levels of homelessness to targets of hate crimes and violent harassment, sexual assault, high suicide rates, and more. Increased visibility, celebration, and inclusion are incredibly important though they do not encapsulate the whole picture.

As of 2021, the number of anti-trans bills, targeting trans\* youth, has already topped 2020. There are more than 100 bills across 33 states; these range from blocking access to medical care, including making it a felony to provide certain types of care, to exclusion from school and religious activities. Seventeen of these bills were enacted into law by June 1, 2021. As members of the legal profession, we pay attention to these laws and policies and do what we can to assure an individual's civil rights are supported and granted, rather than denied.

Please see below for some common questions and answers regarding use of pronouns:

### **How does including pronouns help?**

Many times, someone's gender identity is assumed in emails or in the way they present themselves in person. Being misgendered is a reminder of the denial and invisibility of one's own identity.

### **What if being misgendered doesn't bother me?**

Many cisgender (someone whose gender identity matches their sex) individuals can correct pronouns/gender identity without pause and will be immediately accepted. But others, particularly those in the trans\* community, may not appear as the gender with which they identify and normalizing the use of pronouns helps to encourage others to do the same.

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<sup>1</sup> This "trans\*" shorthand is used here to ensure that all diverse groups of identities who may not fall within the "traditional" gender binary are included in discussions, writings, and advocacy.

## **What are some common pronouns?**

She / Her / Hers is a set of pronouns typically used to refer to women, girls, and people who identify as female or feminine.

He / Him / His is a set of pronouns typically used to refer to boys, men, and people who identify as male or masculine.

They / Them / Theirs is a set of pronouns typically used to refer to non-binary, gender fluid, genderqueer, or two-spirit people.

## **I've seen discussions about using the word "they". What's up with that?**

"They" can be used as a singular or plural pronoun, and already commonly is! For example:

Akira: "XYZ's general counsel is so nice!"

Banu: "Oh, what's their name? Where did they work beforehand?"

It is similar to how "you" can be singular or plural, but does not indicate gender identity. And even as a singular pronoun, "they" often still works the same as the plural (note above, it's "they work"), so you generally do not have to worry about that (some individuals may request differently, but that is part of knowing a person's pronouns!).

## **How can I learn more?**

There are multiple additional resources to learn more. Here are a few favorites:

Trans Talk (a very in depth resource): <https://medium.com/trans-talk/faq-on-pronouns-trans-people-b501cb1f668f>

NPR (on trans\* issues in the workplace): <https://www.npr.org/2020/06/02/867780063/4-ways-to-make-your-workplace-equitable-for-trans-people>

Hollaback (bystander intervention): <https://www.ihollaback.org/bystander-intervention-to-stop-lgbtq-harassment/>

GLAAD (quick tips): <https://www.glaad.org/transgender/allies>

National Center for Transgender Equality (general FAQ): <https://transequality.org/issues/resources/frequently-asked-questions-about-transgender-people>