



Gender-Neutral Pronoun Practice

A Starting Place Discussion Guide

Gender: Your Guide (GYG) is aimed at people who may not know much about gender diversity, and welcomes beginners into the project of making spaces where gender is less rigid: a source of more joy and less harm. This discussion guide offers a starting place to begin practicing gender-neutral pronouns with others.

Before you host the discussion... read Chapters 1-5 so that you are ready to help when questions arise. I suggest also doing the Chapter 4 exercises on your own or with a friend so that you know what to expect.

Suggested advanced reading for everyone:

- Chapter 3: Learning About the Transgender Spectrum
- Chapter 4: A Gender-Neutral Pronoun Primer

Begin your discussion by... asking everyone to share something that was new to them in chapters 3 and 4.

Suggested group readings (together, aloud) and activities:

- There's safety in numbers! Read aloud each pronunciation column in the table on p. 104 in unison, without reproaching any awkward giggles. Repeat if you like! Do the same for the xe/xem and ze/hir examples on p. 105. Pair up, cover up these boxes and complete the Fill in The Blank box, with or without the help of the table. Feel free to set up a friendly competition, if that suits your group.
- Read the sidebars on p. 97, 110 and 194, as well as 'The Grammar Argument' section in Chapter 9 (pp. 193-195). Taking the lead yourself, encourage participants to share their own challenges with singular they usage and reflect on whether they resonate with what they have read.
- Read aloud in unison the table on p. 108, and then cover the table and complete the box below. In pairs or small groups, chat about Evan using singular they/them and the questions on p. 111.
- Read the 'Avoiding Pronouns' section (pp. 120-122), including the box containing the pronoun-free example. Using the questions at the bottom of p. 122, have pair or small group conversations about Evan's predicament without using gender pronouns of any kind.
- In pairs or in a fishbowl (in the whole group, participants tap in and out of playing the different roles at their discretion), role play a conversation with someone who insists on just using a transgender person's name instead of their correct pronoun.
- Break into pairs and have each pair select a person they have in common. Set the timer and hold two-minute conversations about that person, with either a neo-pronoun package or singular they. Repeat either with different pairs, or in the same pairs with different people being spoken about.

Next steps:

- Encourage participants to make follow-up dates with each other to practice, using some of the strategies outlined in Chapter 5: Strategies for Using Peoples' Pronouns Correctly (pp. 114-118).
- Read Chapter 5 in its entirety and reconvene to discuss.