Chrysalis Center Presents

Health Equity News

neopronouns

The Chrysalis Health Equity project is thrilled to be back bringing you a second volume of 'Health Equity News'. The focus of today's newsletter is neopronouns. Unlike our last edition, this edition leans more on personal accounts and lived experience of folx who use neopronouns, rather than on peer reviewed literature and evidence based recommendations. The evidence supports trans affirming care, and part of trans affirming care is learning about neopronouns, so that when you encounter them, you will know what to do and how to use them.

Please note: while this is a topic that is important for us to cover, we do not have lived experience using neopronouns. We will do our best to include a wide array of perspectives when covering this topic, but our depth of knowledge comes with limitations. We appreciate your grace as we navigate these topics, and sincerely hope you enjoy learning something new.

Contents:

More resources:

We sourced heavily from the following sources for this edition of Health Equity News:

PFlag.org
Minus18.org
UNC Greensboro
Maia Kobabe

Neopronouns Explained

Pronouns are words that a person may use to identify themselves instead of their name. For example, she/her/hers and he/him/his are typically feminine and masculine pronouns, respectively. However, some feel more comfortable with gender-neutral pronouns. The most common gender-neutral pronouns are they/them/theirs, used in the singular to refer to an individual in a way that isn't gendered. Some people will use more than one set of pronouns, and you are encouraged to alternate among them in conversation.

Neopronouns are a category of new (neo) pronouns that are increasingly used in place of "she," "he," or "they" when referring to a person. Some examples include: xe/xem/xyr, ze/hir/hirs, and ey/em/eir. Neopronouns can be used by anyone, though most often they are used by transgender, non-binary, and/or gender nonconforming people.

Common neopronouns, with the singular 'they' included for reference, and examples of how they are used

	Subject Pronouns	Object Pronouns	Possessive Adjectives	Possessive Pronouns	Reflexive Pronouns
They	*They* laughed	I called *them*	*Their* eyes gleam	That is *theirs*	They like *themselves*
Ne	*Ne* laughed	I called *nem*	*Nir* eyes gleam	That is *nirs*	Ne likes *nemself*
Ve	*Ve* laughed	I called *ver*	*Vis* eyes gleam	That is *vis*	Ve likes *verself*
Spivak	*Ey* laughed	I called *em*	*Eir* eyes gleam	That is *eirs*	Ey likes *emself*
Ze/Zie and Hir	*Ze* laughed	I called *hir*	*Hir* eyes gleam	That is *hirs*	Ze likes *hirself*
Ze/Zie and Zir	*Ze* laughed	I called *zir*	*Zir* eyes gleam	That is *zirs*	Ze likes *zirself*
Xe	*Xe* laughed	I called *xem*	*Xyr* eyes gleam	That is *xyrs*	Xe likes *xemself*

Don't panic over pronunciation! While there are common ways to pronounce these pronouns, there are many variations, so it is best to ask. If someone trusts you enough to share their pronouns with you, you should feel comfortable asking for clarification if you need it! For example, "Hey there, Taylor, I noticed the pronoun "x-e" on your nametag and I want to make sure I am pronouncing that right. Can you tell me how you pronounce it?". You also might find yourself in a situation where you hear a pronoun you aren't familiar with and don't know how to use. Try this: "Taylor, I heard you say you use "ze/zir" pronouns and I want to make sure I'm using them correctly. Can you help me?".

Don't want to put someone on the spot? Want to be better prepared and more knowledgeable about using neopronouns? Practice, practice, practice! Minus 18 is an online network driven by LGBTQ+ youth in Australia, and they have created a wonderful online app where you can practice with many pronouns and neopronouns.

Practice, here: https://www.minus18.org.au/pronouns-app

UNC GREENSBORO | Division of Student Affairs
Intercultural Engagement

Blevins, K. R. (2018, May). Defining: Neopronouns. Retrieved September 19, 2018, from http://mykidisgay.com/defining-neopronouns/

(2017, June). Why Pronouns Matter. Retrieved September 19, 2018, from https://intercultural.uncg.edu/student-advocacy-outreach/lgbt-community/lgbtq-resources/trans-resources/why-pronouns-matter

History
of neopronouns

Neo may mean new but neopronouns have been around for longer than you might think. As early as 1789 William H. Marshall recorded the gender-neutral pronoun "ou" and the Merriam-Webster dictionary recognized "thon" (a contraction of "that one") as a gender-neutral pronoun from 1934-1961.

Some attribute the origin of neopronouns to the website Tumblr and while that is not historically correct, Tumblr has played a role in the way neopronouns are used in today's world. Tumblr has allowed for unrestricted creativity with neopronouns allowing anything to be used as a pronoun, including emojis, objects, fandom references, etc.

While some members of the LGBTQIA+ community see object related neopronouns (such as emojis, animals, etc.) as dehumanizing, others see it as a form of liberation and a way to further explore their identity.

Neopronouns can be way of dismantling the gender binary and completely stepping away from it, an idea that can be appealing in the neurodivergent population as well. Neopronouns allow users who have a different relationship with gender to move away from the boxes and create their own gender identity.

"no pronouns" or "any pronouns"

what does it mean?

"No pronouns" is when someone prefers not to use pronouns when being referred to, so instead of she/he/they/etc. you would use that person's name or descriptions such as that person's relationship to you (my friend, my boss, the host, etc.) when referring to someone who uses no pronouns. It is important to note that when someone uses no pronouns this includes "they", when referring to that person it is important to avoid any and all pronouns even gender-neutral ones as any use of pronouns is misgendering to a person who uses no pronouns. This may come off as confusing at first but with a little practice you'll soon be able to easily refer to a person without pronouns.

On the opposite side of "no pronouns" is a person who uses "any pronouns". Any pronouns means that this individual is comfortable with any pronoun being used to refer to them. Some individuals may say something like "any pronouns except she/her/hers" as well. It is also important to distinguish between any pronouns and "all pronouns", all pronouns users may prefer an intentional effort be made to use all pronouns when referring to that person, this means that the pronouns are constantly changing to represent all pronouns. You may mess up and that's okay as long as you are making a continuous effort to respect whatever pronouns someone uses, this means educating yourself and doing the work. Remember it is not the job of a neopronoun user to teach you how to use and respect the pronouns they prefer.

gender queer

the most banned book in America

Gender Queer is a graphic novel and memoir, published in 2019 by author Maia Kobabe (pronouns e/em/eir). It chronicals Kobabe's experience growing up and coming to terms with eir gender and gender expression. It is often identified as being the 'most banned book in America' because of the book's themes of gender and sexuality exploration. The book was originally intended to be a tool for Kobabe to explain to eir family what it means to be non-binary and asexual, but the book is also a guide to help its readers to learn more about gender identity.

Gender Queer is available for purchase on Amazon, as well as most major book retailers. You can also find it at your local library. We hope you check it out!
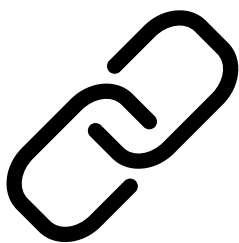
Click Here: NPR Morning Edition

minus 18

an app to help you learn pronouns

The Minus 18 app was designed by the Minus 18 nonprofit to help users master the use of pronouns. The app itself has a wide variety of pronoun options, ranging from the pronouns we see everyday (he, she, they), all the way to the most commonly used neopronouns. The app is meant to be used on web browsers, and is easily accessible from your phone or your computer. It has a fun, easy to understand interface, and is designed to be engaging and entertaining.

Minus 18 is an Australian non-profit dedicated to improving the lives of LGBTQIA+ youth in Australia and beyond. Their app was designed by LGBTQIA+ youth to help others learn how to use pronouns and neopronouns correctly.

Minus 18 app