

# POWER IN PRIDE

Pronouns | Vocabulary from the Show | Advice for Educators

## Pronouns?

Words that can replace nouns in a discourse in which those nouns have already been otherwise identified.

Ex: "He went to the bathroom." "She drank water." "They are reading a book."

They/them/theirs is a common non-binary pronoun. It can be used in the singular form to not specify someone's gender, or to recognize someone's specifically non-binary gender identity.

## Why are pronouns important?

Misgendering (using the wrong pronouns for someone) is harmful because it is a sign of disrespect to someone's gender identity. It can also lead to students feeling unsafe in the classroom, because if their identity is not respected by their teacher, they may feel more vulnerable to harassment from their teacher or from their peers in the room.

## What if you make a mistake?

Apologize, correct yourself, and keep the conversation moving!

## Vocabulary from Our Show

•**Gender Identity** - When we are born, we are assigned a gender based on our sexual organs. As we grow up, we can come to identify (or not) with that gender we were assigned. Gender is not the same as biological sex. Gender is subjective, it is a social and cultural organization of people. We can explore our gender identities and name them for ourselves. (Mia: "All people are created equal regardless of their gender identity")

•**Heteros** - Heterosexual people. People who identify as a male or female gender and are only attracted people they see as being of the gender opposite to their own. (Other sexual identities include Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Pansexual, Asexual and more!) (Mia: "We are endowed by the Universe with as many rights as heteros")

•**Gag, the** - A shock from the fierceness of something you experience or someone you encounter. (Mia: "Among these [rights] are life, liberty, and the pursuit of the gag")

•**Queer** - An umbrella term for the LGBTQIA community used commonly now, though some people do not prefer this word because of its not-too-distant history as a slur term. Queer folk define their sexuality and gender as they see fit, often with the understanding that sexuality and gender are fluid and do not need to be labeled with traditional labels. (Dionne: "We, the queer, question everything")





## CPS “Supporting Gender Diversity” Toolkit

About Face Theatre encourages educators to visit the Office of Student Health and Wellness webpage to read CPS’s “Supporting Gender Diversity Toolkit” (2017) in full and implement its suggestions. In this toolkit, you will find:

- A template for a plan staff can make with trans students to help them feel safe and supported at school.
- How staff can update information related to a student’s name and pronouns in SIM.
- CPS’s official statement that “intentional or persistent refusal of students or staff to respect a student’s gender identity by their chosen names and pronouns violates the Student Code of Conduct and Title IX Sexual Harassment Policy.”

•**Colonizers** - This term is included in our show to recognize that most of us are part of a colonial system that has oppressed native people of this continent for hundreds of years. Queer identities are minority identities, and it is part of our work to raise the voices and experiences of other minority identities so that we can pursue justice together. (Mia: “We, the queer, recognize we live on colonizers land”)

•**Trans/ Transgender** - Someone with a gender identity that differs from their assigned sex. (Jimbo: “Am I trans enough? Do I look it? Is there a right way to be trans?”)

•**Drag** - Performance art that features someone playing an exaggerated character of another gender. (Jimbo: “At 17, I realize that doing drag is more than just a character I’m putting on”)

•**Genderqueer/Non-binary** - A category for gender identities that are not exclusively masculine or feminine. Many non-binary or genderqueer people use gender-neutral pronouns such as (but not limited to) “they/them/theirs”. (Aimy: “... that nonbinary genius at the show”)

•**Polyamorous** - Someone who has consensual romantic or sexual relationships with multiple partners at the same time. (Aimy: “Honey, you’re polyamorous. (...) Fulfilling different needs and wants in different relationships with multiple partners... will feel amazing.”)

•**Gender binary** - A societal belief that male and female are the only two genders. (Jimbo: “You’re gonna realize that the gender binary ain’t for you”)

•**Bi/Bisexual** - Someone who is attracted to people of multiple genders. (Dionne: “Claiming this new word ‘bi’ hasn’t changed me”)

•**Transition** - The process of matching one’s outward expression of gender with the gender identity that most closely aligns with them. Transitioning can be, but is not required to be, medical. Medical gender transitioning can include gender reassignment surgery or using hormonal treatment therapies. (Mia: “I think I want to transition, they said... I think I want hormones, they said”)

•**Cisgender** - People whose gender identity is congruent with their assigned sex. The prefix “cis” means “on the same side” as opposed to “trans” which means “across/beyond”. (Jimbo: “My power is being loud and proud in this cisgender heteronormative patriarchal society”)

- **Heteronormative** - The societal expectation that heterosexuality is the default or expected sexuality for everyone in the world, and the tendency of people who are heterosexual to ignore sexual and gender diversity present in the world. (Jimbo: "My power is being loud and proud in this cisgender heteronormative patriarchal society")
- **Voguing** - A form of dance or movement that consists of striking a series of poses, imitating models on a catwalk or runway. This form of dance has its roots in the underground gay clubs of the mid-20th century and was created by gay and trans people of color. (Donny: "Voguing is an art, as well as a political statement/ You pose, you turn, you give face, breaking the gender binary")

### *Some tips for Educators include...*

- Introduce yourself to your class with your names and pronouns, and invite students to do the same. "My name is\_\_\_ and my pronouns are she/her/hers. When I take attendance, please respond with your name pronunciation and the pronouns you would like to me use for you." Take notes of these pronouns on the roster so that you will remember.
- Names and pronouns for students should be on a roster each teacher gets. CPS's "Supporting Gender Diversity Toolkit" (2017) provides detailed instructions on how to change a student's information in the Student Information Management system (SIM).
- Avoid gendered addresses like "boys and girls" or "ladies and gentlemen", etc. Try "all students" or "everyone" as examples of inclusive terms.
- Avoid asking students to line up as boys or girls or separating them by gender. You can use other things, such as "odd and even birthdate".
- Use inclusive examples in lessons : Aim to include English classes with queer protagonists and experiences; science classes recognizing more than two genders; math courses using more varied examples than "Bill and Sue"; health courses offering comprehensive information on sexuality, gender, and safer sex for all students; physical education classes that do not separate students by gender.

The vocabulary and advice compiled for this handout were compiled with assistance from CPS "Supporting Gender Diversity Toolkit" (2017); Transgender History: Updated Edition (Susan Stryker 2018); and Youth Speak Out: A report from About Face Youth Ensemble.