

EDI Guide to Introducing Speakers

As a mark of respect, it is important to properly refer to the speaker you are introducing both in terms of their name, their background (where they previously studied), and their pronouns. This concept is also true when speaking to/about/or introducing colleagues, undergraduate and graduate students, and guests.

1. Make sure you know how to pronounce your speaker's name.

In advance of their seminar, ask them to pronounce it for you in private and not in front of an audience. Practice it and then say it with confidence when introducing them. The same goes for the places where they studied.

You can get a head start on learning the proper pronunciation by using websites such as <https://www.pronouncenames.com/>; but even with this tool it is always best to confirm the proper pronunciation with the speaker since they may pronounce their name differently than the website.

Know the person's pronouns. A first place to look to find out the person's pronoun is their email signature or their website. You could also ask people who know them well, such as supervisors or lab members.

If these strategies don't provide the information you are looking for, discreetly ask the person what their pronoun is (don't say preferred pronoun, just pronoun). Do not worry about their biology at birth. Their pronoun is how **they** identify.

- a. Example of possible pronouns: she, he, they and ze (ze is singular and pronounced zee).
 - i. If the person identifies as **they**, you conjugate it as you would normally (plural). Examples: "Juli studied at Arizona State and then they moved to Chicago for their graduate work" or "They are originally from Northern Arizona".
 - ii. If the person is a trans man or woman, then use their identified pronoun. Call them **she** (for a trans woman) or **he** (for a trans man).
 - iii. Useful definitions (*just FYI*):
 1. A **trans woman** – A person who *identifies* as a woman who was assigned male at birth.
 2. A **trans man** – A person who *identifies* as a man who was assigned female at birth.
 3. A **nonbinary person** – A person who *identifies* as more than one gender, or no gender, or a third gender (not woman or man). *Broad term.*
 4. Being **genderfluid** – *Identifying* as not having a fixed gender.
 5. An **intersex person** – (from Wikipedia) a person *born* with any of several variations in sex characteristics, including chromosomes, gonads, sex hormones or genitals that, according to the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, "do not fit the typical definitions for male or female bodies". *This is not a gender (category of self-identification).*
- b. BOTTOM LINE: CALL PEOPLE BY THE PRONOUNS THAT THEY REQUEST!

2. Keep the introduction professional.

For students in particular be careful relating information about the person that is irrelevant to their career. (Example: "She is such a great group mom, she always bakes us cookies!") With your buddies in academia, perhaps you can take greater license than with your students, but always keep your audience in mind.

Finally, avoid making any assumptions about where they are from. *As a general rule, refrain from assuming anything about places you have never been or know only in a limited fashion.*

3. Do your best and be conscientious.

Less common pronouns are easy to use with just a little bit of thought and practice. Pronouncing a person's name perfectly is not required. You just need to do a reasonable job given your sound-making skills to mimic how your speaker pronounces their name to show respect. Your speaker will appreciate it.

Nice teachable moment on names: <https://mashable.com/video/hasan-minhaj-ellen-show/>.