

Pronouns

WHAT ARE GENDER PRONOUNS?

Gender pronouns are the words that people would like others to use when communicating with or about them. The most common gender pronouns are ‘she, her, hers’ and ‘he, him, his’. Pronouns such as ‘they, them, theirs’ and others are often used by people who do not conform to binary male/female categorizations.

WHY DO SOME STAFF MEMBERS USE PRONOUNS IN THEIR EMAIL SIGNATURES, ZOOM HANDLES AND IN OTHER AREAS?

- The Island Institute’s Inclusion and Equity Taskforce is working to help our organization develop a more inclusive and equitable workplace in which all employees feel welcome. Giving employees the option to use their pronouns helps us create a respectful work culture for everyone.
- The Island Institute is actively working on Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Justice (DEIJ) issues and creating a practice around our employees use of pronouns is part of that work. The use of pronouns has helped raise awareness and sparked productive conversations about gender issues and DEIJ issues broadly, both within our organization and with our partners and constituents.

WHY DO SOME STAFF MEMBERS CHOOSE NOT TO USE PRONOUNS IN THEIR EMAIL SIGNATURES, ZOOM HANDLES AND IN OTHER AREAS?

- In keeping with our goal of creating a respectful work culture for everyone, the option to use pronouns is an invitation, not a requirement.
- Not everyone feels comfortable or needs to share their pronouns. People may choose not to share their pronouns for a variety of reasons. The choice to use pronouns in the workplace or not is up to the individual and both choices are accepted and respected.

WHERE CAN I LEARN MORE ABOUT GENDER PRONOUNS?

There are many excellent resources on this topic. Here are a few that we like:

www.mypronouns.org/what-and-why
www.cultureamp.com/blog/sharing-gender-pronouns-at-work
www.glsen.org/activity/pronouns-guide-glsen
www.outmaine.org/resources/resources-library

HOW CAN I LEARN MORE ABOUT THE WORK OF THE ISLAND INSTITUTE’S INCLUSION AND EQUITY TASK FORCE?

Contact Karen Burns, Chief Leadership Officer: kburns@islandinstitute.org