

# How to:

## Ask for Pronouns

Inviting pronouns is great, inclusive, and affirming. There are, however, challenges with any direct ask that could be read (even if it wasn't intended as such) as a demand. Some reasons why direct asks can quickly get challenging/accidentally harmful are:

The person being asked to share pronouns might not be openly trans and asking them to explicitly list/state their pronouns publicly can feel like a lot of pressure or cause dysphoria.

The person might fear harassment/backlash associated with the pronouns they choose. This can be particularly challenging with events that are open to the public and widely being shared/livestreamed. What someone might dare say in a closed conference room with 20 faces can feel very different when they feel like they're being projected out into the void of the internet for an unknown number of strangers to see (in the moment and then doubly so in the way that digital things can feel so permanent).

The person you're asking might be privately questioning their gender (and doesn't want everyone to know that). If that person has to state their pronouns it could feel like they're being asked to misgender themselves.

The person you're asking may not yet know what pronouns they want to use, and they might not be comfortable announcing/discussing that.

Pronouns can vary from one context to another. Online conferences/livestreams may be a singular event, but they could feel the same way that publishing pronouns in a bio sometimes does. Some people prefer to have individual conversations about pronouns privately rather than having a public proverbial stamp on a profile, on a slide, or on anything (semi-) permanent.

Someone might be in an unsafe situation and is cautious about any kind of public disclosure as a result.

The person might be stealth (i.e. does not tell anyone they are trans) and is fearful of stating pronouns/publicly displaying pronouns out of a fear that this might signal to others that they are trans.

**DDFC**

Courtesy of Dr. Kris Aric Knisely