Pronouns Stickers on our Nametags

Why use them?

1. They make it easy to know which pronouns to use when you aren't sure.
2. They allow people with uncommon pronoun-sets to communicate them easily.
3. They prompt a conversation about gender and raise awareness that gender is complicated.
4. They create a welcoming environment for people of all genders.

When you're the only person who needs to communicate your pronouns, it can be uncomfortable. You don't want to be misgendered, but the fact that you're saying something about pronouns while other people aren't marks you as different from them. By encouraging broad adoption of pronoun stickers on nametags (or any other method of communicating personal identity) you help create an environment where that kind of conversation is normal.

As a transgender person, nonbinary person or person who's misgendered for other reasons, communicating about gender helps avoid being misgendered. As a cisgender person or someone else who is reliably correctly gendered by others, communicating even though it may be redundant contributes to a community standard that communicating about gender is something that is normal here, making it unremarkable for everyone including the people who need it.

But I'm never misgendered, why should I put my pronouns on my nametag?

If this is the first time you've thought about communicating your pronouns, you may want to reflect on the privilege of having a gender identity that is the same as the sex assigned to you at birth. We stand in solidarity with the trans and non-binary members of our community by displaying our pronouns as cisgender people. In doing so we contribute to the normalization of conversations about pronouns and gender-identity, so that those most directly affected are not always left with the
Burden of initiating or communicating their pronouns.

This is hard! What if I mess up?

Anything that is new, or different from what we're used to, will be challenging—it' ok! Learning to ask about a person's pronouns, or learning to use gender-neutral pronouns that you aren't yet familiar with (like they/them or ze/zir) will be difficult at first and we are all sure to make a few mistakes as we grow. If you make a mistake, just apologize for your mistake and for any harm you've unintentionally caused, and commit yourself to a continual effort to grow.

Vocabulary 101

Assigned sex: The gender given to a person by the doctor that delivered them and/or their parents at birth. Usually based on anatomy, and ignoring the complexities of gender, both biological and social.

Gender identity: An individual's internal sense of being a man, a woman, neither of these, both, and so on—it is one's inner sense of being and one's own understanding of how one relates to gender. With the exception of agender people, who often do not have an internal sense of gender, most people have a gender identity.

Gender Binary—A system of classifying sex and gender into two distinct and disconnected forms—male/man/masculine and female/woman/feminine—and assigning all bodies, identities, roles, and attributes to one side or the other. The gender binary is dependent on policing people to make sure they don't digress from the system in appearance, anatomy, or behavior.

Gender expression— The ways in which a person manifests masculinity, femininity, both, or neither through appearance, behavior, dress, speech patterns, preferences, and more.

Sexual Orientation—The gendered pattern of a person's sexual attractions, or the gender of the people a person is attracted to. Gender identity refers only to a person's own self. Gender and sexual orientation are often lumped together, despite being different, because of societal expectations around sex, gender, and expression. Transgender individuals can be lesbian, gay, bisexual, queer, straight, or any other sexual orientation. Everyone has a sexual orientation.

Transgender—Describes a person whose identity does not align with their assigned sex. Many transgender people choose to medically transition, to more closely align their body and appearance to their own sense of gender, but many others do not. Anyone whose identity crosses gender boundaries may chose to identify as transgender, but some may not. Transgender is an adjective, and using it as a noun is often offensive to transgender people. Trans is often used as a shortened umbrella term for people with transgender and similar identities. These definitions continues to evolve.

Cisgender—A term that is becoming increasingly popular to describe people who are not trans or gender variant—in other words, those whose gender identities, presentations, and behavior "match" (according to the gender binary) the sex they were assigned at birth. Cis is a prefix with roots that mean "on the same side"; trans and cis are neutral descriptors.

Genderqueer / Third Gender / Gender Fluid —Terms used by people who identify as being between and/or other than man or woman. They may feel they are neither, a little bit of both, or they may simply feel restricted by gender labels.

Gender Non-Conforming / Gender Variant—General terms for people who bend gender in some way and/or have non-binary gender identities.

Intersex—A general term used for a variety of genetic, hormonal, or anatomical conditions in which a person's reproductive or sexual anatomy doesn't seem to fit the typical definitions of female or male. When a child is born intersex, many doctors and parents respond with panic and rush to correct the perceived problem with surgery, which often causes mental and physical difficulties later in life. Some intersex individuals identify as transgender or gender variant; others do not.

Transsexual—Historically this term has been used to refer to individuals who have medically and legally changed their sex, or who wish to do so. Most transsexual people feel a conflict between their gender identity and the sex they were assigned at birth. Other labels used within this group include MtF (male-to-female) or trans woman, and FtM (female-to-male) or trans man. While many younger trans people dislike these terms and consider them outdated, they are still used by some members of the community.