ACS Inclusivity Style Guide

TIP SHEET Gender and sexuality

For more context, review the "Gender and sexuality" section of the Inclusivity Style Guide. Use this tip sheet in combination with the "General guidelines" tip sheet.

Use gender-neutral language

Opt for gender-neutral terms rather than gendered equivalents. Using words that refer to men as a default can reinforce the idea that men are or should be dominant.

Example

✅ **Use:** humankind

❌ **Avoid:** mankind

Gender is not binary

Not everyone has a gender identity that is completely female or completely male. Some people are a third gender, a mix of female and male, or no gender, for example.

Example

✅ **Use:** Welcome, everyone.

❌ **Avoid:** Welcome, ladies and gentlemen.

Use the singular "they"

Use the singular "they" for all people who use that pronoun and when referring to an unidentified person. It is a neutral pronoun that can replace gendered language.

Example

✅ **Use:** their memory

❌ **Avoid:** his or her memory

Know the language

LGBTQ+: Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer or questioning

Nonbinary: An adjective to describe people whose gender identity is not completely male or completely female

Pronouns: The most common are "he/him," "she/her," and "they/them." But many more exist. Ask "What pronouns do you use?" or "What are your pronouns?"

Transgender: Having a gender identity that does not perfectly match the sex assigned at birth. It is typically not a gender. Some consider being transgender as part of their identity, and some do not.

Key reminder: Use "is" instead of "identifies as" for gender and sexuality, and avoid "prefers" in reference to pronouns.

Like what you've read? See the full guide from the American Chemical Society.
www.acs.org/inclusivityguide