How to U se Inclusi v e Lang uag e: G ender Pronouns In recent years, much of our speaking and writing have evolved from using predominantly the pronouns

͞ŚĞͬŚŝŵͬŚŝƐ ͟ƚŽ͞Śe/him/hi s͟ ĂŶĚ ͞she/her/he rs͟ when referring to people. This usual ly manifests a s

͞ŚĞƌŽƌƐ ŚĞ͟Žƌ ͞ŚŝƐŽ ƌŚĞƌ͟ŝŶ ǁƌŝƚŝŶŐ ǁŚĞŶ ƌĞĨĞƌ ƌŝŶŐ ƚ ŽĂ ƉĞƌƐŽŶŝŶĂŐĞŶĞƌĂůƐĞŶƐĞ ǁŚĞŶǁ ƌŝƚŝŶŐ ͘

However, w ith the awareness o f gender diversity we are learning ƚŚĂƚƉĞŽƉůĞ͛ƐŐĞŶĚĞƌŝĚĞŶƚŝƚŝĞƐĐĂŶŶŽƚ

be assumed without aski ng them how they identify fi rst. That begs the question for ma ny, ͞tŚĂƚĚŽ ǁĞ

ƵƐĞŶŽǁ͍ ͟

Wh y “th ey ”?

While it is st ill very import ant to a sk what prono uns som eone uses, we may not alway s be a ble to a sk

t he pe rson and t hus we c an use t he g ender - neutra l pron ouns t hey/t hem/t he irs. Though un derstood by

many to be only a plural set o f prono uns, they/them/theirs are often used to refer to a per son in the

singular in way s we never really think ab out. For exampl e, one could naturally say : x Ex. ͞^ŽŵĞŽŶĞĨŽƌŐŽƚtheir book in the T E58 1 2. n 8e T E58 1I f2 49o1 49C(e)3TF -d60176(593.12 0 ua r(o) T ET Q q9 ͟ -

Practice using people’s pronouns
tĞĂůůŵĂŬĞŵŝƐƚĂŬĞƐƐŽŵĞƚŝŵĞƐ͕ĂŶĚǇŽƵŵĂǇŶŽƚŐĞƚƐŽŵĞŽŶĞ͛ƐƉƌŽŶŽƵŶƐƌŝŐŚƚĞǀĞƌǇƚŝŵĞ͘tŚĞŶƚŚŝƐ
happens, it is best to simply apologize to the person and move on knowing better. One way to lessen
these mistakes is with practicing using pronouns that you may not be used to using.
Try composing a sentence or two for each person below using their pronouns in their subject, object,
possessive forms.
Ex. Tommy (he/him/his)
Tommy is picking up his new dog from the shelter today. He is very excited to be bringing the dog home
with him. 1. Ada (she/her/hers)
____
____ 2. Kerry (they/them/theirs)
____ 3. Drew (fae/faer/faers)
____ 4. The unknown owner of a set of keys that you found at the park
____
____

Works Cited and Further Reading
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