

# PRACTICE MAKES PROGRESS

## HOW TO SHOW YOUR TRANSGENDER AND NONBINARY COMMUNITY MEMBERS RESPECT AND GET THEIR PRONOUNS RIGHT

You're human, you make mistakes sometimes. You've read the resources on how to apologize for misgendering someone, and you're looking to **make less mistakes**, since your slip-ups have harmful, human consequences.

The best apology is changed behavior, so get your reps! Here are some ideas on how to practice, take action in the moment, and grow your brain. You got this.

**IT TAKES 300 REPS TO BUILD A NEW NEURAL PATHWAY AND GET SOMETHING IN YOUR MUSCLE MEMORY, AND 3,000 REPS TO ACCESS THE SKILL UNDER PRESSURE.**

### PHONE A FRIEND

Tell someone in your life about your commitment to work on getting pronouns right. Getting a non-judgemental practice partner to correct you when you mess up can help draw attention to your unconscious mistakes.

### DON'T WAIT, RE-STATE

Did you misgender someone when they weren't around? Still immediately correct yourself. "Ask Skylar about his... excuse me, *about their* idea."

### LIMBER UP

Describe the plot of your favorite movie—and use different pronouns for the main character. "Ariel will show you his world!"

### TALKING POINTS

Practice talking about the person you're misgendering—a lot. You can talk out loud to yourself in the car, you can tell your cat about the funny joke they made, you can record yourself and listen back to check your work... just say the words!

### BE KIND IN YOUR MIND

Did you realize after the fact that you misgendered someone? Say at least 3 nice things about them in your head using their correct pronouns. *She* is creative, *she* makes excellent pozole, *she* has an infectious laugh.



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partners

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## ANIMAL COMPANION

Singular “they” pronouns throwing your brain for a loop? As a *temporary measure*, imagine the person has a tiny animal in their pocket— that way, when you’re thinking about the two of them, you’re still talking about the one of them. Would they look good with a magical toad? The smallest dragonfly?

## WHEN WORDS FAIL: SHIFT YOUR MENTAL MODELS

Getting people’s pronouns correct is a big deal. And sometimes, that’s only part of the problem. You might need to fully switch out your filter that you screen this person through. Maybe you keep misgendering him because you still conceive of him as a woman. Move him into the correct gender category in your mind.

You’re already good at this. You switch your filter when you realize your coworker is actually 33, not 20. You even do this with gender! You realize your friend’s dog is actually a boy! You realize your neighbor’s baby is a girl! Switch your filter and the words will follow.

## WRITE UNTIL RIGHT

Practicing (and flubbing!) verbally can feel vulnerable. Write about the person using their correct pronouns. Whether it’s a fairy tale or a recap of your last interaction, slowing down and using different parts of your brain can help the pronouns stick.

## MORE INTAKE, MORE UPTAKE

Particularly with singular “they”, you might not be in a lot of spaces where people are using those pronouns. You can change that! Seek out media by and about trans people, and you’ll exponentially increase the times you hear singular “they” in context.

## LET’S GET QUIZZICAL

Sometimes it helps to really interrogate what is challenging you about using trans people’s correct pronouns. Because your brain is really powerful! You’ve learned new things this week, this year, this decade! You’re constantly evolving, just like the world. So why are trans people’s pronouns not sticking?

As a point of comparison, how quickly do you shift people’s last name if they change it after getting married? Could it be that cultural transphobia makes changing the words we use to refer to others seem strange or unreasonable?