

Foothills Style Guide

This is an in-process and imperfect guide

Communicating About Gender

Always write in ways that affirm people's self-identified gender, center inclusion, and avoid language rooted in assumption, erasure, or biological essentialism.

Core Commitments

- **Respect self-identification.**
Use the name, pronouns, and identity terms people choose for themselves—always.
- **Center inclusion, not explanation.**
Write with the assumption that trans and nonbinary people belong, not as if their inclusion needs justification.
- **Use plain language that affirms dignity, not technical jargon.**

? DO

- Say **“trans and nonbinary people”** when referring to all who are not cisgender.
- Use **“they”** as a singular pronoun when gender is unknown or when someone uses they/them.
- Use phrases like:
 - **“All who identify as...”**
 - **“People of all genders”**
 - **“Trans, cis, and nonbinary people alike”**
- Say **“sex assigned at birth”** instead of “biological sex.”
- Refer to reproductive health using **“people who can get pregnant”** rather than “women,” when gender diversity is relevant.

? DON'T

- Don't say “transgenders,” “the transgendered,” or “preferred pronouns.”
Say: “transgender people” and “pronouns.”
 - Don't refer to someone's past name or gender without consent.
That includes “before they transitioned” or “used to be a woman.”
 - Don't say “born a man/woman,” “biological male/female,” or “opposite sex.”
 - Don't write “women and trans women.”
Say: “all women, including trans women.”
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