

Pronoun Questions at CRB Reviews

Remember the setting.

It is important to remember appropriate questions in a CRB context. As a part of the Oregon Judicial Department's CRB program, you do not need to ask attendees their sexual orientation, gender identity, etc. This information is not relevant to a finding and is not the concern of the court system.

Ask for a person's pronouns only if you must address them using pronouns and have already stated yours.

Why? In one-on-one and friendly small group settings, asking a person's pronouns is typically seen as a sign of respect for that individual's personhood. In public group settings like a CRB review, however, asking one person to state their pronouns while no one else does can be considered rude. We should not put someone on the spot as the only person in the room who needs to publicly state their pronouns.

Check out MyPronouns.com for simple instruction on asking for someone's pronouns.

Use gender-neutral language if you do not know a person's pronouns.

If your board did not introduce themselves by stating their pronouns, and you therefore cannot ask others to state theirs, then you must simply use gender-neutral language. This is good practice generally.

Examples:

- "Caseworker, how is Zuli doing in school this year?"
- "CASA, do you have any additional input about Taylor's current services? We understand you have spent a lot of time with Taylor since the placement change last month."
- "Attorney for Jordan, do you support a finding of reasonable efforts in this case?"

You can also replace gender-specific pronouns with they/them. They/them has for hundreds of years been a gender-neutral pronoun in addition to being both a plural and a singular. For instance, Charles Dickens used they/them pronouns in *The Pickwick Papers* to anonymize individuals' genders. You can use the [Practice with Pronouns](#) app to practice speaking/writing with they/them pronouns.

Examples:

- "After Alex reported bullying at the afterschool program, how was their concern addressed?"
- "What services were recommended in their mental health assessment last week?"
- "Has Jaydin had their Benchmark Review yet?"
- "When did they start counseling at New Horizons?"
- "How often are they having contact with their new baby sibling?"

What if I make a mistake with pronouns?