

Nursing isn't just about "she/her/hers" anymore; using gender-neutral language in nursing education

Austin Nation, PhD, RN, PHN (he/him/his)

Definition of Nurse

A person who cares for the sick or infirm specifically : a licensed health-care professional who practices independently or is supervised by a physician, surgeon, or dentist and who is skilled in promoting and maintaining health

Why do nursing educators constantly refer to "nurse" as "she/her/hers"?

Is a Nurse a She, a He, or a They?

Even though 10% (or fewer) of nurses who are men will feel excluded if every generic nurse is a she—and it's hard enough to attract men to this profession as it is. Why alienate them further?

What are Pronouns?

They are a set of words that are used in a sentence in place of a person's name that is typically tied to gender. So the conscious use of pronouns is important to respecting gender identity.

Which
pronouns
do you
use?
#PRONOUNSMATTER



What is Gender-Neutral Language

Gender neutral pronouns are pronouns that do not imply gender, male or female. They/them and neo pronouns are gender neutral

Why is this Important? (faculty/student/patient)

This is important that our faculty and nursing students feel comfortable and able identify themselves as professional nurses. They need to feel a sense of belonging and connection to the profession of nursing regardless of their gender identity. We want to welcome all diverse individuals to nursing and have a diverse and inclusive workforce.

In the clinical setting, the consistent use of personal pronouns is uncommon. However, The Joint Commission has mandated the use of preferred pronouns to prevent misgendering of LGBTQ+ individuals. There needs to be a more education and cultural awareness about the importance of consistent use of pronouns to prevent health disparities and to provide care that is gender appropriate. This needs to be taught to our nursing students.

As diversity continues to increase, nursing educators are responsible for creating a climate where students care begin to be prepared to learn to value, respect, understand and care for one another and the diverse patients they will be taking care of.

Strategies for Supporting Pronoun Incorporation

Foster a culture of inclusion, need coalition of leaders with BIPOC. Write diversity and inclusivity statement/strategic plan.

Are they currently mindful of using their own pronouns when introducing themselves the first time to students, in their email signature, and/or ZOOM name

Find out if faculty have ever been educated on the use of gender-neutral language

Find out how they feel about incorporating gender-neutral language into their classroom and clinical setting (with students and/or patients)

Incorporate standard language our master nursing syllabus that addresses importance of gender-neutral language and use of correct pronouns.

Normalize the asking of how students/patients would like to be addressed by confirming their preferred names and pronouns.

Expected Outcome

Using pronouns would be common practice among the majority of nursing faculty within the next 3 years.

Faculty would incorporate education for students about the importance of using correct gender-neutral language and pronouns in all courses in nursing program within 3 years.





CAPSTONE PRESENTATION & GRADUATION

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Biography

Austin Nation, PhD, RN, PHN is a graduate of the University of California, San Francisco – School of Nursing, Community Health Systems. He has been a nurse for over 35 years and is currently an Assistant Professor in the School of Nursing at California State University (CSU), Fullerton.

Dr. Nation completed both the Minority Training Program in Cancer Control Research (MTPCCR), as well as was awarded the California Pre-doctoral Program – Sally Casanova Pre-doctoral Scholars, completing summer research internships at both Yale University and Duke University

Dr. Nation was also a fellow in the Black AIDS Institute's African American HIV University – Science and Treatment College and was the recipient of the CSU Chancellor/William Randolph Hearst Award and the Graduate Assistant in Areas of National Need (GAANN) – Clinical Teaching and Research Scholar Fellow.

He is actively involved in a number of professional organizations including Western Institute of Nursing, the Association of Nurses in AIDS Care and National Black Nurses Association

He has been doing HIV prevention education for over 20 years

His past research interest was with understanding substance use and HIV among young Black men who have sex with men (MSM), funded by the Substance Abuse Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)/ American Nurses Association (ANA) Minority Fellowship Program. He is currently exploring LGBTQ+ health care and mental health care access in Orange County.

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