



*For Local 8 Members at Crisis Connections*

*July 29, 2021*

We've heard staff concerns about some departments being asked by supervisors to disclose their pronouns. Specifically there was confusion about whether this was mandatory or voluntary. The Bargaining Team reached out to management, made them aware, and requested that an email be sent out clarifying that disclosure of your personal information is strictly voluntary. We are hopeful that management will swiftly address this issue. We believe their intentions were good but the communication/implementation was lacking.

This seemed like a great opportunity for us to provide some information around creating safe, supportive working environments.

## **Providing Pronouns**

Honoring a person's name and pronouns shows respect and acknowledgement of their identity. Names and pronouns are not "preferences," they communicate who we are. Introducing yourself with your own name and pronouns invites the other person to reciprocate, if comfortable doing so. If someone does not share their pronouns with you, they may not feel safe enough to do so because it has not been safe for them in the past. It is not good or appropriate to push someone to share something they are not ready to.

If a person does not share their pronouns and/or you do not know their pronouns, then use the person's name. If you do not know the person's name, use a descriptor. An example is "the person in the blue shirt," versus "that guy over there."

It's also important not to assume that someone feels safe sharing their pronouns with everyone just because they shared their pronouns with you. Check with your colleagues before correcting someone who misgenders them when they're not around. Be mindful about outing someone by sharing their personal information without their permission.

## **Misgendering**

To misgender someone is to use a name, pronoun, or form of address that does not match their identity. Whether misgendering happens as an innocent mistake or with malicious intent, it can be deeply hurtful. If you misgender someone by accident, promptly apologize without making an excessive show out of the mistake or your guilt, which can create even more discomfort for the person who has been misgendered. Show that you care by doing better moving forward.

## Microaggressions

Microaggressions are everyday comments and questions that can be hurtful or stigmatizing to marginalized people and groups. Microaggressions are subtle, and the person committing the microaggression may have no idea that their comments are harmful. For example, a common comment that trans people may hear is, "You don't look trans!" This is often phrased as a compliment; however, it implies that being trans is a negative thing, or that all people want to be perceived as cis. Since microaggressions are subtle, do your best and listen to any feedback you may receive. If someone's feelings are hurt by something you've said or done, take the time to understand and to learn from the experience.

## Other Helpful Resources

[Gender Pronouns 12.13.19.pdf \(opeiu8.org\)](#)

<https://www.therapyroute.com/therapist/van-ethan-levy-la-jolla-us>

<https://www.thetrevorproject.org/resources/trevor-support-center/a-guide-to-being-an-ally-to-transgender-and-nonbinary-youth/>

## Upcoming OPEIU LOCAL 8 Event - You're Invited!!

Employees at the Cornish College of the Arts are organizing to form a union with OPEIU. Help us celebrate their organizing efforts by joining us for a night of union solidarity and fun! The event, [Cornish Staff Union Solidarity Concert & Rally](#), is scheduled for Tuesday, August 3<sup>rd</sup> from 4:30pm to 6:30pm at the Urban Triangle Park in Seattle. Please join OPEIU LOCAL 8 for music, food, swag, and an evening of solidarity and community.



## Union Bargaining Team

Sonia Brown, 2-1-1  
Elizabeth Duncavage, Crisis Line  
SK Lewis, King County Crisis Line  
Darby Robertson, Crisis Line  
Stephen Stott, Community Training  
Sarah Welch, Crisis Department  
Shaun Whitcher, Teen Link

*You can reach out to the Bargaining Team via [ccbargainingteam@gmail.com](mailto:ccbargainingteam@gmail.com) with questions, concerns, complaints, and ideas.*

*You can also contact Tara Powell, Union Representative at [Tara@opeiu8.org](mailto:Tara@opeiu8.org) or (206) 441-8880 x106*



**OFFICE AND PROFESSIONAL EMPLOYEES INTERNATIONAL UNION LOCAL 8**

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