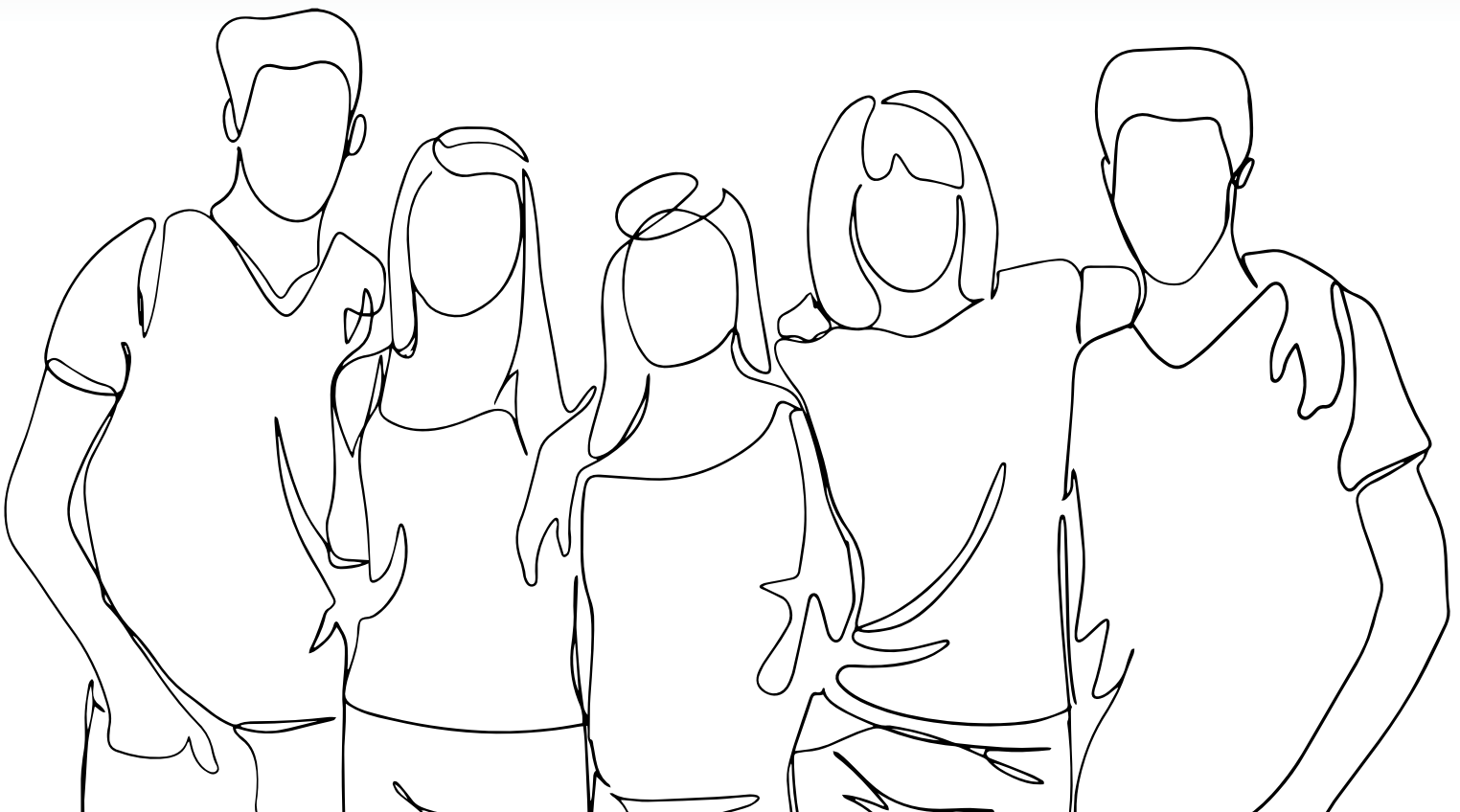# Belongly

The Pronoun Pro's Playbook

Be

The Professional Community for Mental Health Providers. Where mental health providers connect, collaborate, and expand their resources.

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Introduction

Therapists are skilled conversationalists who are trained to handle difficult topics with ease. However, some topics, like asking about pronouns, can make even the most skilled therapists uncomfortable in this rapidly evolving world.

The Belongly Pronoun Pro's Playbook provides tips, tricks, and a bonus chart tool for organizing client pronouns and avoiding mistakes, making it easier for therapists to create a safe space that respects all pronouns and identities. With the playbook, therapists can feel empowered and confident in their ability to handle pronoun-related conversations.

What is Gender-Affirming Care?

Gender-Affirming Care is a holistic healthcare approach that recognizes and validates an individual's gender identity, taking into account their unique experiences and needs.

While sex is typically categorized as male, female, intersex, or hermaphrodite, gender is a more fluid concept that encompasses a range of identities and expressions beyond traditional binary definitions.

Gender can be assigned by another person or declared by an individual for themselves. Most importantly, gender identity is what someone feels is their true gender.

Using someone's correct gender pronouns is a way of respecting their true gender identity, regardless of their assigned sex at birth or how they present themselves in public. It can make a huge difference in how safe and validated they feel in a therapeutic setting.

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Tools for Pronoun Proficiency

Now, on to the good stuff - the tools for uncomfortable conversations!

Let's make our client's space an inclusive and fabulous oasis! Mindfully sprinkle some gender pronouns and inclusive language here and there, and voilà! But beware, using the wrong pronouns can be a real bummer, totally invalidating, and even risky business. But remember, we all make mistakes! The key is to stay open to learning and correction, and take accountability for those mistakes!

Here are some strategies for proactive pronoun discussion:

- Introduce yourself to a new client with your own pronouns. This sets the tone and lets clients know that you're committed to respecting their gender identity.

  Pro tip: Promote inclusion culture by adding your pronouns to your email signature, name badge, social media accounts, and website.

  "Hi! I'm ____ and my pronouns are _____. Would you like to share yours?"

- Use non-judgmental language. Instead of assuming a client's pronouns based on their appearance, ask them directly what they prefer.

  "I want to make sure I address you correctly. What pronouns do you go by?"

- Normalize pronoun use. Make it a regular part of your sessions to check in on clients' pronouns and use them consistently throughout your interactions.

  "Can you remind me of which pronouns you use for yourself?"

- Don't panic if you make a mistake. Apologize, correct yourself, and move on. The most important thing is to show that you're committed to getting it right in the future (Hold yourself accountable and actually commit! Our tracking tool will help!)

  "I apologize, I meant to say she."

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Here's a chart of the most commonly used pronouns

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	Subject	Object	Possessive	Pronunciation	Example
Gender Binary	She	Her	Hers	As It Looks	She is speaking
	He	Him	His	As It Looks	He is speaking
Gender Neutral	They (Singular)	Them	Theirs	As It Looks	They are speaking
	Zie	Hir	Hirs	Zhee, Here, Heres	Zie is speaking
	Ze	Zir	Zirs	Zhee, Zhere, Zheres	Ze is speaking
	Xe	Xem	Yxr	Zhee, Zhym, Zhyre	Xe is speaking
	Per	Pers	Perself	As It Looks	Per is speaking
	Ve	Ver	Vis	Vee, Ver, Viz	Ve is speaking
	Ey	Em	Eirs	Ay, Em,Ayrz	Ey is speaking
	Fae	Faer	Faers	Fay, Fair, Fayrz	Fae is speaking
	Sie	Sie	Hir	See, See, Here	Sie is speaking
	Bun	Bun	Bunself	As It Looks	Bun is speaking
	Ne	Nem	Nir	Nee, Nem, Neer	Ne is speaking

Along with any other pronoun that an individual identifies with and requests to be used for them. It's important to always ask someone what pronouns they prefer and to use them correctly, as using incorrect pronouns can be hurtful and disrespectful.

Pronoun Dos and Don'ts

Do!

Do recognize that everyone has pronouns—not just trans people—and that asking pronouns is important, both so someone is not misgendered and so that trans people are not the only ones who will feel the need to share their pronouns.

Do ask people the pronouns they use for themselves whenever you ask people their name, such as when you meet someone for the first time or when you do go-arounds at meetings. Keep in mind that people may change the pronouns they go by, so it is necessary to ask pronouns in go-arounds regularly.

Don't!

Don't refer to pronouns such as "they/them" or "ze/zir" as "gender-neutral pronouns." While some trans people identify as gender-neutral, many see themselves as gendered, but as gender nonconforming or non-binary. Better language is "non-binary pronouns."

Don't describe the pronouns someone uses as "preferred pronouns." It is not a preference. The pronouns that a person uses are their pronouns and the only ones that should be used for them.

Don't say "male pronouns" and "female pronouns." Pronouns are not necessary tied to someone's gender identity: some trans people use "he/him" or "she/her," but do not identify as male or female, respectively.

Don't indicate that you "don't care what pronouns are used for me," if you are a cisgender person. Such a statement reinforces the privilege that many cis people have in not needing to worry about the pronouns that people use for them—that they are not going to be misgendered. It also invalidates the experiences of trans people, many of whom struggle with getting people to use their correct pronouns

Understanding when and how to use various pronouns in dialogue.

She/her/hers
She/her/hers are third-person singular feminine pronouns. "She" is the subjective form, used as the subject of a sentence, such as "She is going to the store." "Her" is the objective form, used as the object of a sentence or a preposition, such as "I gave the book to her." "Hers" is the possessive form, used to indicate ownership, such as "The book is hers."

He/him/his
He/him/his are third-person singular masculine pronouns. "He" is the subjective form, used as the subject of a sentence, such as "He is going to the store." "Him" is the objective form, used as the object of a sentence or a preposition, such as "I gave the book to him." "His" is the possessive form, used to indicate ownership, such as "The book is his."

They/them/theirs
They/them/theirs are third-person plural gender-neutral pronouns. "They" is the subjective form, used as the subject of a sentence, such as "They are going to the store." "Them" is the objective form, used as the object of a sentence or a preposition, such as "I gave the book to them." "Theirs" is the possessive form, used to indicate ownership, such as "The book is theirs." They can also be used as singular pronouns for individuals who identify as non-binary, genderqueer, or gender non-conforming.

Ze/hir/hirs
Ze/hir/hirs are third-person singular gender-neutral pronouns. "Ze" is the subjective form, used as the subject of a sentence, such as "Ze is going to the store." "Hir" is the objective form, used as the object of a sentence or a preposition, such as "I gave the book to hir." "Hirs" is the possessive form, used to indicate ownership, such as "The book is hirs." These pronouns are often used by individuals who identify as non-binary or genderqueer, but may also be used by other individuals who prefer gender-neutral language.

Xe/xem/xyrs
Xe/xem/xyrs are third-person singular gender-neutral pronouns. "Xe" is the subjective form, used as the subject of a sentence, such as "Xe is going to the store." "Xem" is the objective form, used as the object of a sentence or a preposition, such as "I gave the book to xem." "Xyrs" is the possessive form, used to indicate ownership, such as "The book is xyrs." These pronouns are often used by individuals who identify as non-binary or genderqueer, but may also be used by other individuals who prefer gender-neutral language.

Ve/ver/vis
Ve/ver/vis are third-person singular gender-neutral pronouns. "Ve" is the subjective form, used as the subject of a sentence, such as "Ve is going to the store." "Ver" is the objective form, used as the object of a sentence or a preposition, such as "I gave the book to ver." "Vis" is the possessive form, used to indicate ownership, such as "The book is vis." These pronouns are often used by individuals who identify as non-binary or genderqueer, but may also be used by other individuals who prefer gender-neutral language.

Ey/em/eirs
Ey/em/eirs are third-person singular gender-neutral pronouns. "Ey" is the subjective form, used as the subject of a sentence, such as "Ey is going to the store." "Em" is the objective form, used as the object of a sentence or a preposition, such as "I gave the book to em." "Eirs" is the possessive form, used to indicate ownership, such as "The book is eirs." These pronouns are often used by individuals who identify as non-binary or genderqueer, but may also be used by other individuals who prefer gender-neutral language.

Per/pers/perself

Per/pers/perself are third-person singular gender-neutral pronouns. "Per" is the subjective form, used as the subject of a sentence, such as "Per is going to the store." "Pers" is the objective form, used as the object of a sentence or a preposition, such as "I gave the book to pers." "Perself" is the reflexive form, used to refer back to the subject, such as "Per did it perself." These pronouns are often used by individuals who identify as non-binary or genderqueer, but may also be used by other individuals who prefer gender-neutral language.

Fae/faer/faers

Fae/faer/faers are third-person singular gender-neutral pronouns. "Fae" is the subjective form, used as the subject of a sentence, such as "Fae is going to the store." "Faer" is the objective form, used as the object of a sentence or a preposition, such as "I gave the book to faer." "Faers" is the possessive form, used to indicate ownership, such as "The book is faers." These pronouns are often used by individuals who identify as non-binary or genderqueer, but may also be used by other individuals who prefer gender-neutral language.

Ne/nem/nir

Ne/nem/nir are third-person singular gender-neutral pronouns. "Ne" is the subjective form, used as the subject of a sentence, such as "Ne is going to the store." "Nem" is the objective form, used as the object of a sentence or a preposition, such as "I gave the book to nem." "Nir" is the possessive form, used to indicate ownership, such as "The book is nir's." These pronouns are often used by individuals who identify as non-binary or genderqueer, but may also be used by other individuals who prefer gender-neutral language.

Zie/hir/hirs

Zie/hir/hirs are third-person singular gender-neutral pronouns. "Zie" is the subjective form, used as the subject of a sentence, such as "Zie is going to the store." "Hir" is the objective form, used as the object of a sentence or a preposition, such as "I gave the book to hir." "Hirs" is the possessive form, used to indicate ownership, such as "The book is hirs." These pronouns are often used by individuals who identify as non-binary or genderqueer, but may also be used by other individuals who prefer gender-neutral language.

Sie/sie/hir

Sie/sie/hir are third-person singular gender-neutral pronouns. "Sie" is the subjective form, used as the subject of a sentence, such as "Sie is going to the store." "Sie" is also the objective form, used as the object of a sentence or a preposition, such as "I gave the book to sie." "Hir" is the possessive form, used to indicate ownership, such as "The book is hir's." These pronouns are often used by individuals who identify as non-binary or genderqueer, but may also be used by other individuals who prefer gender-neutral language.

Bun/bunself

Bun/bunself are third-person singular gender-neutral pronouns. "Bun" is the subjective form, used as the subject of a sentence, such as "Bun is going to the store." "Bun" is also the objective form, used as the object of a sentence or a preposition, such as "I gave the book to bun." "Bunself" is the reflexive form, used to refer back to the subject, such as "Bun did it bunself." These pronouns are often used by individuals who identify as non-binary or genderqueer, but may also be used by other individuals who prefer gender-neutral language.
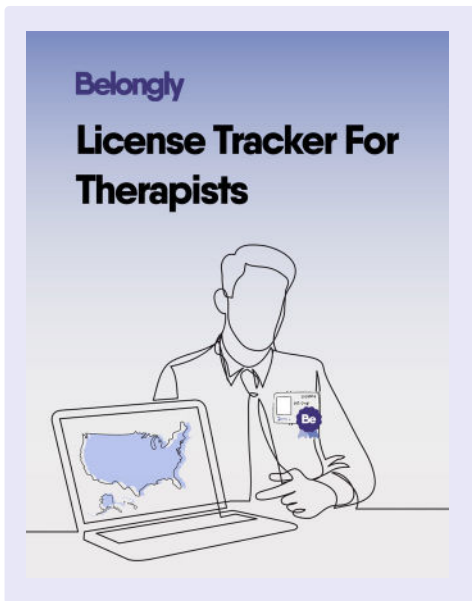
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THERAPY CLIENT PRONOUN TRACKING TOOL

*MAKE SURE TO MAKE REGULAR UPDATES! TRY LINING UP WITH YOUR SCHEDULE FOR CHART & DEMOGRAPHIC UPDATES.

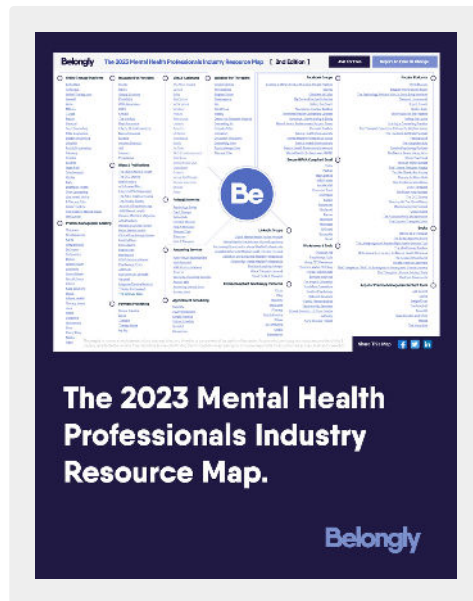| CLIENT NAME / CHART ID	DATE	He/Him/His	She/Her/Hers	They/Them/Theirs	Ze/Hir/Hirs	Ze/Zir/Zirs	Xe/Xem/Xyr	Name (No pronoun)	Other	NOTES
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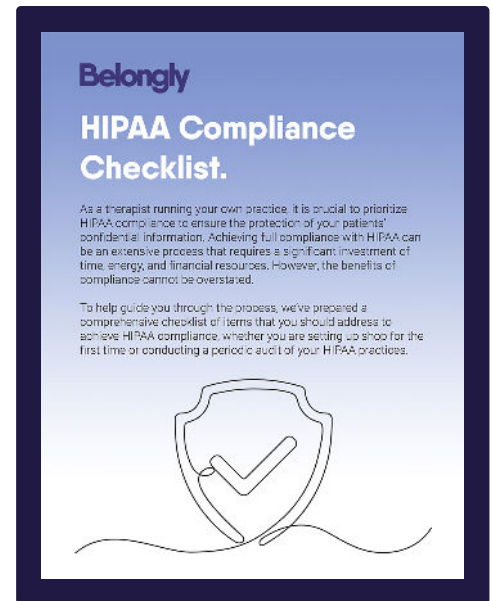# More Mental health professional resources worth engaging with, and sharing.

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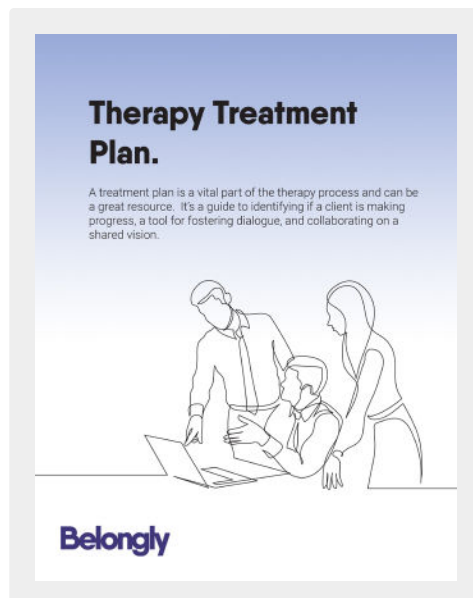

The Belongly License Tracker For Therapists

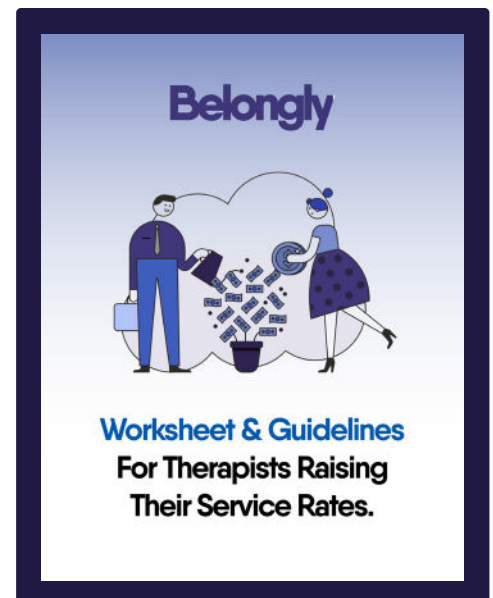**The 2023 Mental Health Professionals Industry Resource Map**

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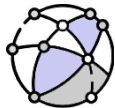**The Belongly Guide To Raising Your Rates**

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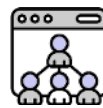
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