**pRiSM Reflections: "Trans Talk”**

The words “sex” and “gender” are often used interchangeably, but they actually refer to two different things. Sex refers to a person’s biological and physical attributes. Gender refers to an internal, deeply felt sense of being a man, a woman, neither, or both. The word transgender refers to someone whose gender identity differs from the sex they were assigned at birth. Those whose gender identity matches the sex they were assigned at birth are referred to as cisgender. Nonbinary and genderqueer people have a gender identity that is not exclusively masculine or feminine.

Using a person’s preferred pronouns when talking about them is common courtesy and one of the most basic ways to show respect for them and their gender identity. While some people go by he/him or she/her pronouns, others go by gender neutral pronouns, such as they/them. A good resource for practicing using gender neutral pronouns is practicewithpronouns.com. You can not always tell a person’s preferred pronouns by looking at them, so it is better to ask what someone’s pronouns are rather than assume. Telling someone your own preferred pronouns when you introduce yourself to them can help make people feel more comfortable telling you theirs.

Please share your comments and questions with pRiSm co-chairs Heshie Zinman at hjzinman@gmail.com or Ellen Poster at ellenajme@aol.com.