## **PTA Connected: Build Up and Belong**

## **Tip Sheet**

**Tip #1 - Select your communities with care**

* When entering a new community, get a “lay of the land.” You can read the rules & observe behaviors of others in the community.
* Check in with yourself; does this community align with your values?
* If not, this may not be the community for you and THAT’S OKAY.
* YOU have the right to join communities that feel “just right” for YOU.

**Tip #2 - Take control of your community experience**

* Learn platform settings that can help you control your experience
  + Find out if the platform allows you to “silence” or “mute” people without blocking them.
  + Know how to block people (and that it is okay to do so.)
  + Learn how to report users that violate community rules.
* Give yourself permission to take breaks from a community.
* Know when a community no longer serves you and when it is best to walk away.

**Tip #3 - Lead by example**

* Facilitate positive environments for others - Create a “welcome table” for others.
  + Be open to learning about new cultures, lifestyles, and experiences.
  + Do not use ableist or racist terms, LQBTQ+ slurs, or common stereotypes.
  + Educate fellow community members on inclusivity.
  + Share the type of content you’d like to see from others in the community.
* Applaud positive community engagement
  + Thank people for the positive contributions they make.
  + Like, Favorite, Upvote content that exemplifies your community goals.
  + Support your community moderators and let them know when they are doing a great job.
  + Ignore negativity; the more you feed a troll, the more the algorithms show their comments.

**Tip #4 - Put technology and social media in its place**

It can help to remind yourself:

* Social media isn’t real; it’s a highlight reel of the most enticing snippets of people’s lives, often edited.
* Not everything you see online is true or meant to be helpful. Sometimes content is posted to generate click and ad revenue, persuade you to feel or act a certain way, or to sell you something.
* Not everything you see online was “meant” for you.

**Tip #5 - Know your limits; Ask for help**

* Pay attention to “red flag feelings” about community members and your interactions with them.
* Trust your gut.
* You are not alone. Reach out to friends, family, or trusted others.
* Decide what kind of support will be most helpful; clearly state your need when asking someone for support.
  + Do you want someone to just listen?
  + Do you need advice?
  + Do you need an adult to intervene?
* When your safety or the safety of someone else is at risk, tell a trusted adult right away.