



Supporting Immigrant Domestic Workers in NY/NJ: Conversation Tips

1. Prepare before the conversation

- Get clear with yourself about what support you can realistically offer: flexibility, paid time off, rides, safety planning, resource connections. This helps you avoid overpromising or reacting defensively in the moment.
- For a full list of concrete support ideas from paid leave to emergency contacts, see the **attached page**.

2. Open with care

- Start by naming care and concern.
- You don't need to wait for the worker to bring this up. Taking the first step opens the door to greater trust.
- **Ex: “ How have you been? I’ve been feeling really concerned about everything happening right now, especially the attacks on immigrant communities, and I wanted to check in with you. How are you and your family doing?”**

3. Listen before assuming

- Spend time listening before moving to solutions. Ask open-ended questions and pay attention to what's shared and what isn't.
- Avoid assuming what would be helpful or expecting answers right away.
- This conversation doesn't have to cover everything, and it doesn't have to happen all at once.
- Listening here is an action. It helps interrupt assumptions and gives the worker space to name what actually matters to them.
- **Ex: “Is there anything that’s been challenging or stressful recently?”**



4. Be clear, even if it feels awkward

- Many of us try to be tactful by speaking vaguely. But vague language can leave workers unsure what you're asking or whether it's safe to share what they actually need.
- Clarity signals care. After listening, ask direct, respectful questions about concrete situations like commuting, schedules, safety, or resources, without pushing for disclosure.
- **Ex: "I've been thinking about how I can be supportive. If anything has been affecting you, whether that's feeling safe traveling here, your schedule, your family, anything else, I want you to know I'm here for you and want to see how I can be most helpful."**

5. Respect boundaries

- **DO NOT ask about immigration status.** Because of the power dynamic between employer and worker, even well-intended questions can feel unsafe or compromising.
- Let the worker decide when and what they choose to share
- Do not inquire about political beliefs. Stay focused on the impact of policies on safety and daily life, rather than their opinion about political leaders. Trust will shape what's shared over time.

6. Offer concrete support

- Share specific types of support you've been thinking about such as schedule flexibility, paid leave, rides, safety planning, or help accessing resources. Frame these as possibilities based on what they're needing.
- Only offer what you can truly follow through on.
- **For a full list of ideas, see the attached page.**
- **Ex: "If something ever were to happen near you or you didn't feel safe coming in, you can stay home and you'll still be paid. Your job would be safe!"**



7. Listen and reflect

- Repeat back what you hear.
- Validate feelings without centering your own fear or opinions.
- For those of us not targeted by the current wave of anti-immigrant policies and sentiment, this conversation is a time to decenter our own feelings of fear, anxiety, or despair, and to offer calm, grounded presence to those who are.

8. This is an ongoing conversation

- Conditions change, and trust builds over time.
- Keep checking in regularly and follow through on anything you offer.
- Showing you care consistently is often more important than solving everything at once.
- **Ex:**
 - **“If something comes up or you think of something you need, please let me know. I care about you and your family, and I want to make sure you feel supported.”**
 - **“I just wanted you to know I’m here, and we can talk more, whenever.”**

9. Remember the bigger purpose

- Silence can feel like indifference. Opening the conversation can signal care and build greater trust.
- This is about stepping into solidarity and showing up starting at home with this existing relationship.



Ideas for Concrete Support

■ Sharing information & Resources

- Print copies of Know Your Rights and legal information

■ Help identify or secure an attorney or legal help as needed

- Find legal help through the Immigration Advocates Network's directory at <https://www.immigrationlawhelp.org>
- Help them avoid fraudulent "immigration assistance"
- Use my home printer or copier for anything my employee needs

■ Increasing Workplace Safety & Flexibility

- Provide additional paid time off and/or advance pay
- Offer Paid Leave During ICE Raids
- Create a transportation plan: provide a ride, pay for a ride share, walk to public transportation together, or provide a transportation stipend
- Be a contact for other people who also employ the worker

■ Help Create & Support an Emergency Plan

- Print and help fill out a Family Preparedness Plan that might include taking on a role
- Contact employee's family and/or emergency contacts if needed
- Ensure emergency contacts are up to date with you (the employer) and at their children's school(s)
- Create a sheet of emergency numbers and important documents for easy access



- Act as an emergency contact myself
- Pick up their children from school or another location
- Help them complete a Parental Authorization Form at <https://www.nyc.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/08/ENG-Family-Preparedness-Forms-and-Documents-Needed-4.pdf>
- This form allows a parent to give another adult temporary authority to make school and medical decisions for their child in an emergency. Needs notarization but doesn't need court approval.