

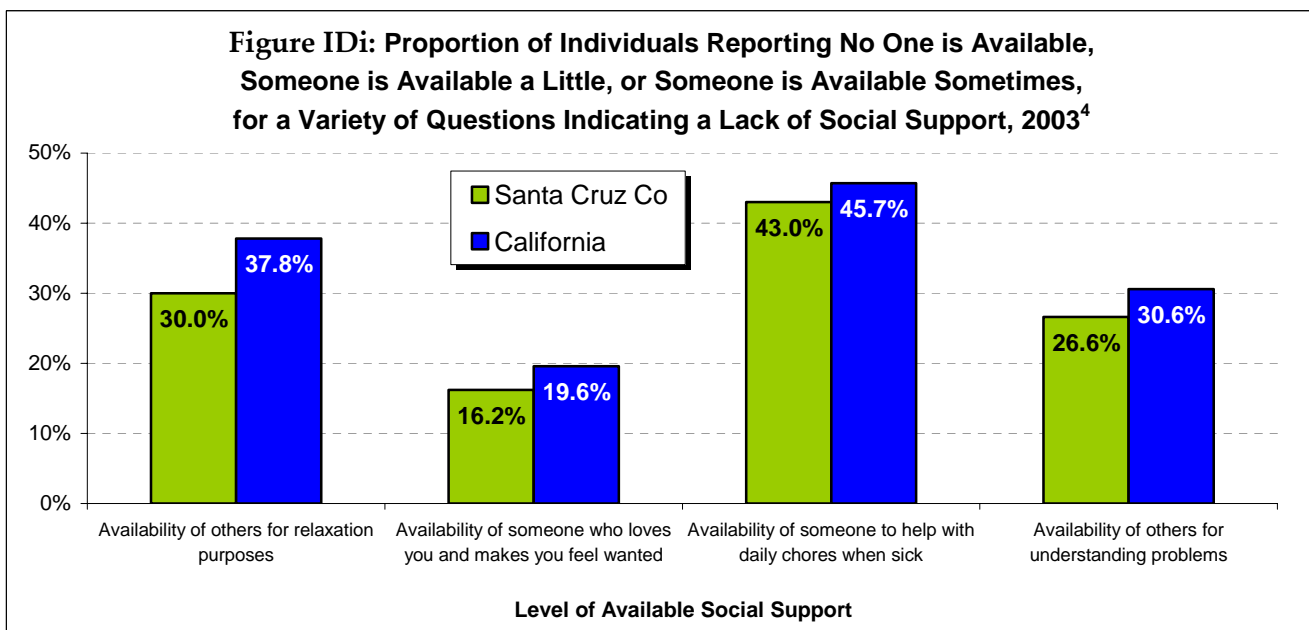
D. FAMILY AND SOCIAL SUPPORT

Importance	Family and social support are important factors in a healthy, long life. Poor family support, social isolation, and limited interaction with others in the community are associated with an increase of morbidity and early mortality. ¹ The effects of family and social support are present at any age, but are more apparent for the very young and the very old who need assistance. This becomes more of a factor as our population ages and more older adults find themselves living alone without a care-giver or other source of adequate social support located nearby. ² Additionally, family support is usually the major source of support in a child's life, and that support system can be stressed when only one parent is available. ¹ The lack of family and social support is adversely related to both mental and physical well-being.
Highlights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 19% of Santa Cruz County adults report never, rarely, or sometimes receiving the social support they need, compared to 26% of all California adults. Santa Cruz County has fewer single-parent households with children under 18 than California does.
Definitions	<u>Single householder</u> : A person living with a child under 18 and not living with a legal spouse of the opposite sex. ³ For the purpose of this report, a single householder is equivalent to a single parent .

i. INADEQUATE SOCIAL SUPPORT

In Santa Cruz County, 19% of the adult population feel that they never, rarely, or sometimes receive the social support they need, compared to 26% of all Californian adults; the figure varies from county to county, between 14%-33%.¹

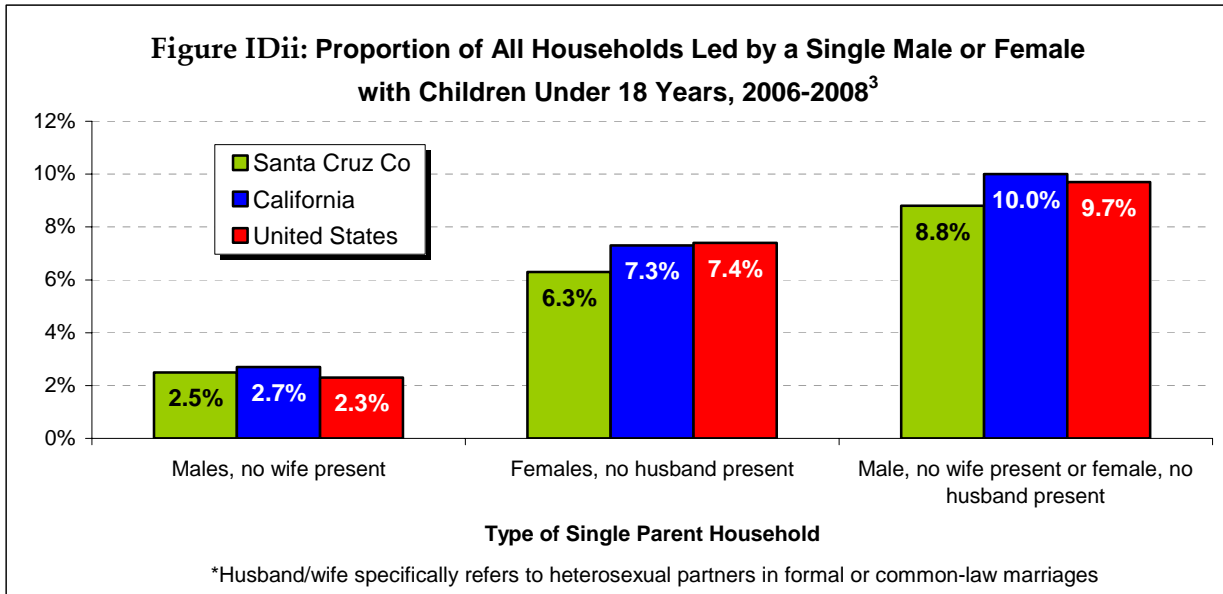
In 2003, the California Health Interview Survey (CHIS) asked four questions related to social support. The questions asked about the availability of others for relaxation purposes, of someone who loved the respondent and made them feel needed, of someone to help with daily chores when they were sick, and of others for understanding problems. Santa Cruz County residents less often than California residents answered that no one was available, or that someone was available a little or sometimes (Figure IDi).⁴



ii. SINGLE-PARENT HOUSEHOLDS

Data collected between 2005 and 2007 showed that 9% of Santa Cruz County households are single-parent households, compared to 10% of all California households; the figure varies by county throughout the state, from 4% to 16%.¹

The American Community Survey (ACS) identified a single householder as a person living with a child under 18 and not living with a legal spouse of the opposite sex.³ For the purpose of this report, a **single householder** is equivalent to a **single parent**. 2006-2008 Census Data estimates that 4,016 (4.3%) of the 93,555 Santa Cruz County households are headed by a male single householder, and 5,858 (6.3%) of households are headed by a female single householder.³



Sources

1. University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute. *County Health Rankings 2010*. <http://www.countyhealthrankings.org/>.
2. White AM et al. "Social Support and Self-Reported Health Status of Older Adults in the United States." *American Journal of Public Health* 99(10):1872-1878, 2009.
3. U.S. Census Bureau, 2006-2008 American Community Survey. <http://www.census.gov/acs/www/index.html>.
4. University of California, Los Angeles. California Health Interview Survey (CHIS) 2003. <http://www.chis.ucla.edu>.