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The two additional tiers, social conditions and local context, and generational embodiment and historical trauma, can help further understand the mechanisms by which ACES influence health and well-being by revealing the causal mechanisms underlying ACES. The lowest tier takes an individual problem to a societal level by highlighting traumatic events that a generation endured. The trauma, if unresolved, gets transmitted to the next generation in the form of abuse or neglect, which indirectly contributes to ACES. Generations also have their cultural norms that may be inappropriate in another generation. It may have been normal to spank children or lock them up in a dark room as a punishment for deviant behavior, but other generations consider that physical and psychological abuse.

Historical trauma includes events that have global impact such as slavery, a pandemic, or war. These events cause tremendous stress in individuals where it affects gene expression that is passed down to future generations. Current generations hold the trauma from previous generations in their DNA.

The next tier encompasses all the societal normative behaviors and expectations, and the current affairs at the local level. This includes the stress level of the environment, what is considered appropriate parenting and the expectations of children. Stress levels can come from lack of resources, discrimination, or anything that threatens livelihood. Violence in the community can directly contribute to trauma by raising the stress levels or becoming a victim of the violence.

Appropriate parenting and expectations of children are also influenced by social conditioning. Egregious acts such as hitting a child for getting bad grades at school or locking up a baby in a separate room to get rid of the crying are inherited by the previous generation. If it does not get corrected at the local level, this directly affects the next generation where they experience adverse childhood events.