



About the Author

Maura E. O’Keefe, LCSW, PhD, is a professor at California State University, Sacramento. Prior to this time she taught at the USC, School of Social Work, now known as USC Suzanne Dworak-Peck School of Social Work. She has been a licensed clinical practitioner for more than 40 years and has worked with diverse populations in various settings (both urban and rural) and capacities, including community mental health, medical, psychiatric, trauma and substance abuse facilities as well as in foster care and adoption services.

Dr. O’Keefe has published numerous articles on family violence, child maltreatment and neglect, dating violence, battered women and their children, posttraumatic stress disorders, and women with co-occurring disorder. Additionally, she has conducted research evaluating the effectiveness of treatment programs on ameliorating some these problems. She has lectured on these topics at universities around the world.

Dr. O’Keefe met Dr. Karls while at USC and collaborated with him in making the PIE system more accessible to students. In 2004, Dr. O’Keefe joined Dr. Karls on the creation of the 2nd edition of the PIE Manual.

Karls, J. & O’Keefe, M. (2008). *PIE Manual: Person-in-environment system: The PIE classification system for social functioning problems*. NASW Press.

It is the author’s hope to further the work of Dr. Karls and his lifelong dedication to the Person in Environment Classification (PIE) System.



History of PIE

The Social Work profession struggled for many years to establish its unique identity among the human services profession. An important step in this struggle was the embracing of the “person in environment” (PIE) perspective. This perspective highlights the importance of understanding individuals and families in light of their environment contexts and has become the philosophy undergirding the social work profession thus addressing a long standing debate over how much attention should be given to individual or environmental change.

Another important step in its struggle for identity was the need for a social work classification system – a classification system that is separate from the DSM. In the early 1980's, a task force of practitioners and academicians, led by Dr. James Karls and Dr. Karin Wandrei, was formed to develop a classification system useable in all fields of social work practice and one that would be both user and client friendly. After a period of field testing, the book, *Person-in-Environment (PIE) System*, (Karls, J. & Wandrei, 1994) and an instruction manual, *PIE Manual-Person-in-Environment System* (Karls, J. & Wandrei, 1994) were published by NASW Press.

In 2008 a new version of PIE and its accompanying software, *CompuPIE* (Karls, J. & O'Keefe, M., 2008) were developed that incorporated feedback from PIE enthusiasts as to how to improve PIE. This new version of PIE along with *CompPIE* has been used by students of social work and practitioners in working in many settings. However, by 2015, the author recognized the need for an updated PIE and *CompuPIE* especially given the publication of DSM 5. The present *CompuPIE* software is significantly more comprehensive, strength based, user friendly and is compatible with both Mac, PC and Linux users.

Importantly, regardless of the changes over the years, the mission of PIE has remained the same -- to provide a tool with which the problems, strengths and coping capacities presented by clients can be systematically and comprehensively assessed, described, and addressed within an eclectic framework that highlights social work's unique contribution to the human service field.