

Observational Studies Program
Online Program – Fall 2026
Seeing the Unseen in Clinical Work



A Two-Year Online Training Based on the Esther Bick Infant Observation Model

Program Overview

The **Observational Studies Program** at the Washington Baltimore Center for Psychoanalysis provides unique, multidisciplinary training grounded in the Infant Observation Method by **Esther Bick at the Tavistock Clinic (1948)**. Developed at the Washington School of Psychiatry (Now New WSP), and since 2022 is part of the Washington Center for Psychoanalysis.

Beginning in **Fall 2026**, a fully **online track** will be available, offering access to clinicians and professionals across the United States, who wish to deepen their observational and clinical skills but cannot attend in person.

“**Seeing the Unseen in Clinical Work**” is taught by experienced faculty of child, adult, couple, and family psychotherapists and psychoanalysts. Through careful, sustained observation and reflection, students learn to identify subtle emotional and relational processes that shape child development and are detected later in clinical interaction. This experiential program develops the right mindset to work with patients of all ages including adults, families and couples.

This online program begins with a 2-year observation*. The participant will have the option to add all of the other segments in our program: Work Discussion (One year), Young Child Observation (one year) and psychoanalytic papers focused on Infant observation as the students go along. It provides the opportunity to students to master their own time.

**Note: The 2-year observation must be consecutive.*

Program Philosophy

Across two years, students cultivate a refined awareness of early emotional states, interpersonal dynamics, cultural contexts, and the impact of the observer’s own experience.

The training strengthens the capacity to:

- Notice subtle affective, sensory, and relational cues
- Attend closely to moment-to-moment experience
- Reflect on the emotional meaning of what is observed

- Develop containment and emotional attunement and the capacity to bear the unknown/certainty.
- Apply observational insight to clinical and professional work.

Program Structure

Meeting Schedule

The online program meets weekly for 28 classes/year, always focused on the unfolding infant observation and its emotional and theoretical implications.

The **proposed meetings are:**

Thursdays at 7:00 PM and Fridays at 1:00 PM Eastern Time

This schedule aims to accommodate professionals across U.S. time zones while maintaining consistency and continuity throughout the year.

Tuition \$900/year Application Fee: \$175

The Observational Studies Online Program qualifies for a maximum amount of 20 CME/CE per year. Space is limited

Year One Online:

The first year includes:

Four or five weekly Infant Observation seminars per month, each centered on the student's ongoing observational experience.

- The observer visits the family once a week for one hour, ideally starting soon after birth (or even before) and continuing until the child's second birthday.
- The observer is a non-participant witness who avoids taking notes during the visit, responding to questions, or acting as a professional clinician. Their role is to simply be present and receive the experience.

The observation focuses on the infant's development, their interactions with family members (especially the primary caregiver/mother), the emotional atmosphere of the home, and the unconscious communications between family members.

Students develop the foundational observational stance, steady attention, emotional presence, and the capacity to reflect deeply on the experience of the observed relationship.

This sustained, regular, and neutral presence over time allows the student to witness the emergence of the infant's personality.

Weekly Supervision Group:

Immediately following the visit, the observer writes a highly detailed, account of everything that happened, including their own feelings and reactions, which are seen as central to understanding the emotional impact of the observation. This material is discussed in a confidential seminar group with experienced seminar leaders on a weekly basis.

Year Two Online:

Students continue with their second year of Infant Observation. An optional **Work Discussion Seminar** is also offered, where participants present clinical encounters and observational moments from their own professional environments.

The skills developed in Year One become tools for exploring unconscious communication and relational processes in diverse contexts. **All components outside the Infant Observation seminars are optional** and scheduled based on the needs and availability of the group.

Annual Joint Gathering

At the **end of each academic year**, students from the **online program** and the **in-person program** in Washington DC, come together for a joint meeting.

This gathering is designed to:

- Strengthen personal and professional connections.
- Create a sense of intimate community across the WBCP
- Build a national network of colleagues committed to observational learning
- The shared meeting honors the Tavistock tradition of learning in community and offers a meaningful bridge between the two program tracks.

Who Should Apply

Applications are open to:

- Mental health professionals
- Medical practitioners, including nurse practitioners
- Educators and teachers
- Anyone working with children, families, or emotionally vulnerable populations

No prior psychoanalytic training is necessary.

We encourage you to apply promptly. Once the groups are complete, we will be having a monthly meeting to help students get to know each other and to find the right resources to find a possible family to observe.

Apply for Observational Studies Program: https://wbcp.memberclicks.net/app_osp_onlinetraining_2026-2027

Want to Learn More About the Observational Studies Program?

We will be having an online OPEN HOUSE on Saturday, April 18, 2026, at 9:30 am – 11:30am.

Please visit the Open House registration page via the link below to learn more.

Open House Registration: https://wbcp.memberclicks.net/osp_open_house_online_students_4-18-26#!/

Like Us on Facebook!  facebook.com/washbaltocenterforpsychoanalysis

In the meantime, for more information you can reach the co-chairs:

Silvana Kaufman: kaufmansilvana@yahoo.com

Deborah Blessing: deborahblessing1@gmail.com

Nydia Lisman Pieczanski: n.l.pieczanski@gmail.com (Founding Chair)

Continuing Education Units are not issued for partial attendance.

CVs Available Upon Request

There is no known commercial support for this program.

Continuing Education Information

Continuing Medical Education – This activity has been planned and implemented in accordance with the accreditation requirements and policies of the Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education (ACCME) through the joint providership of American Psychoanalytic Association and The Washington Baltimore Center for Psychoanalysis. The American Psychoanalytic Association is accredited by the ACCME to provide continuing medical education for physicians.

The American Psychoanalytic Association designates this live activity for a maximum of 20.0 *AMA PRA Category 1 Credit(s)*[™]. Physicians should claim only the credit commensurate with the extent of their participation in the activity.

DISCLOSURE STATEMENT: The APsA CE Committee has reviewed the materials for accredited continuing education and has determined that this activity is not related to the product line of ineligible companies and therefore, the activity meets the exception outlined in Standard 3: ACCME's identification, mitigation and disclosure of relevant financial relationship. This activity does not have any known commercial support.

Continuing Education – Social Workers – The programs of The Washington Baltimore Center for Psychoanalysis, Inc. meet the criteria for continuing education as defined by the District of Columbia and Virginia Boards of Social Work, and the American Board of Examiners in Clinical Social Work. The Washington Baltimore Center for Psychoanalysis, Inc. designates this program as a continuing education activity for social work for 1 credit hour per hour for this activity.

The Washington Baltimore Center for Psychoanalysis, Inc. is authorized by the Board of Social Work Examiners in Maryland to sponsor social work continuing education learning activities and maintains full responsibility for this program. This training qualifies for Category 1 continuing education units.

Continuing Education – Psychologists – The Washington Baltimore Center for Psychoanalysis, Inc. is approved by the American Psychological Association to sponsor continuing education for psychologists. The Washington Baltimore Center for Psychoanalysis, Inc. maintains responsibility for this program and its content.

Continuing Education – Licensed Professional Counselors – The Washington Baltimore Center for Psychoanalysis, Inc. continuing education credits meet the criteria and may be submitted for re-licensure of LPCs in Maryland, DC, and Virginia. This program/activity has been approved by the Maryland State Board of Professional Counselors and Therapists to satisfy Category A continuing education requirements.