



Centre for Addiction and Mental Health
Centre de toxicomanie et de santé mentale

Acute Psychological Trauma-Research at TTC

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Chief Safety Officer
Toronto Transit Commission



Toronto Transit Commission



- ~ 13,000 employees, moving 1.5 million passengers/day in Toronto.



- One of the largest transit systems in North America.



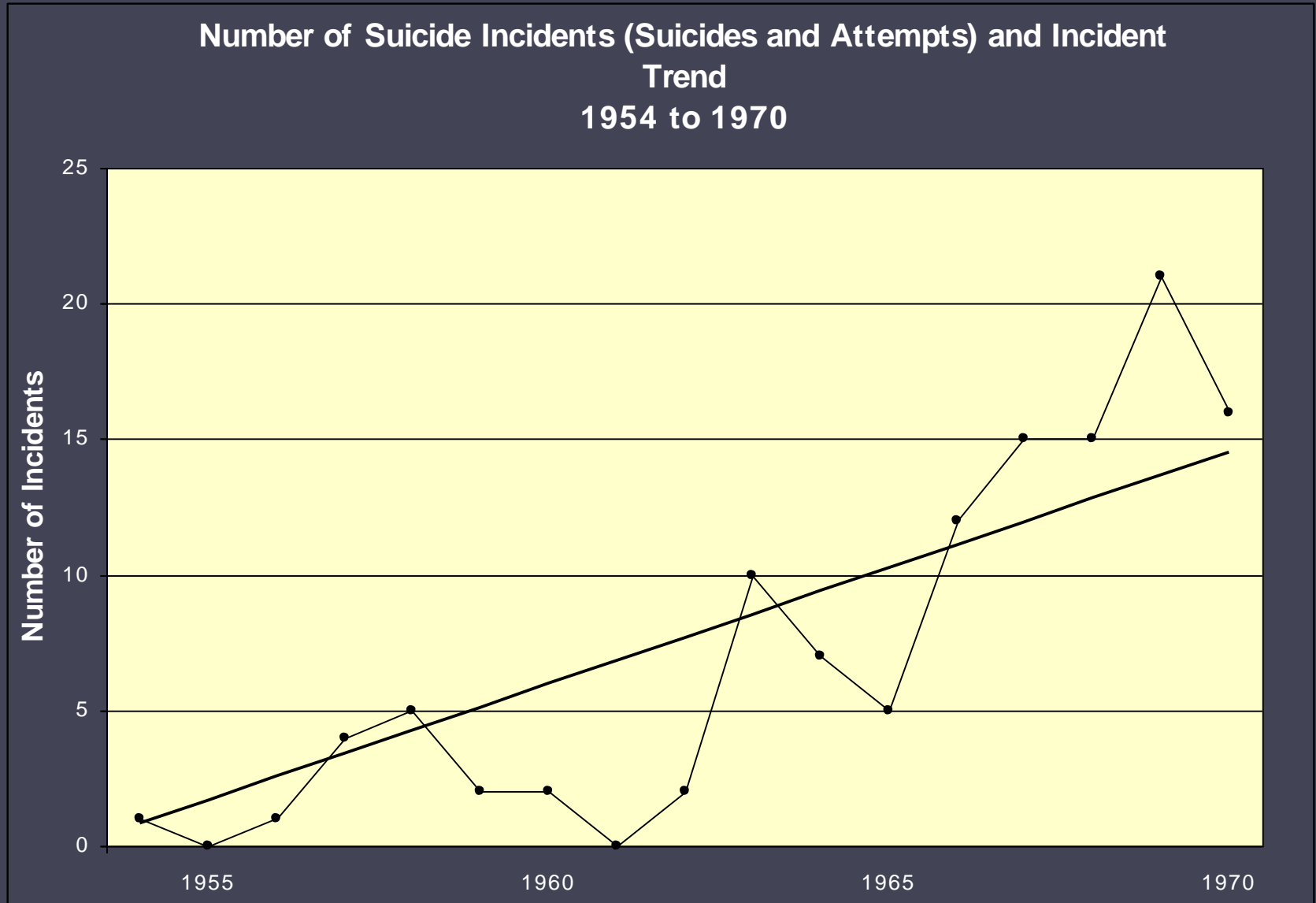
- Fleet includes buses, streetcars and subway.

TTC Timelines

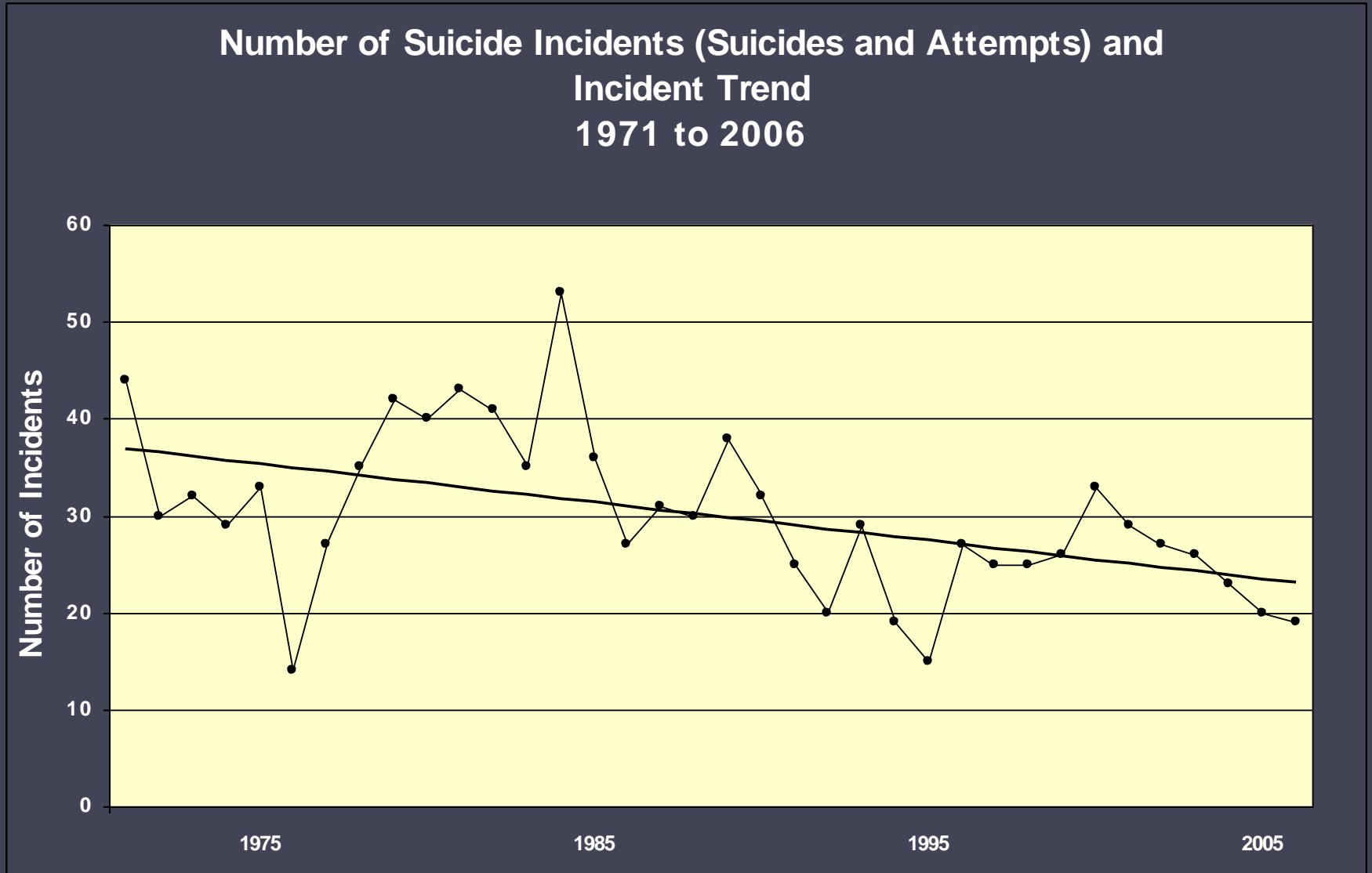


- 1954** • Yonge subway line opens
- 1971** • Media protocol
- 1990's** • Pushing & copycats
- 2004** • Gatekeeper Program
- 2008-2011** • Acute Psychological Trauma Study
- 2011** • CrisisLink

History (1954 to 1970)

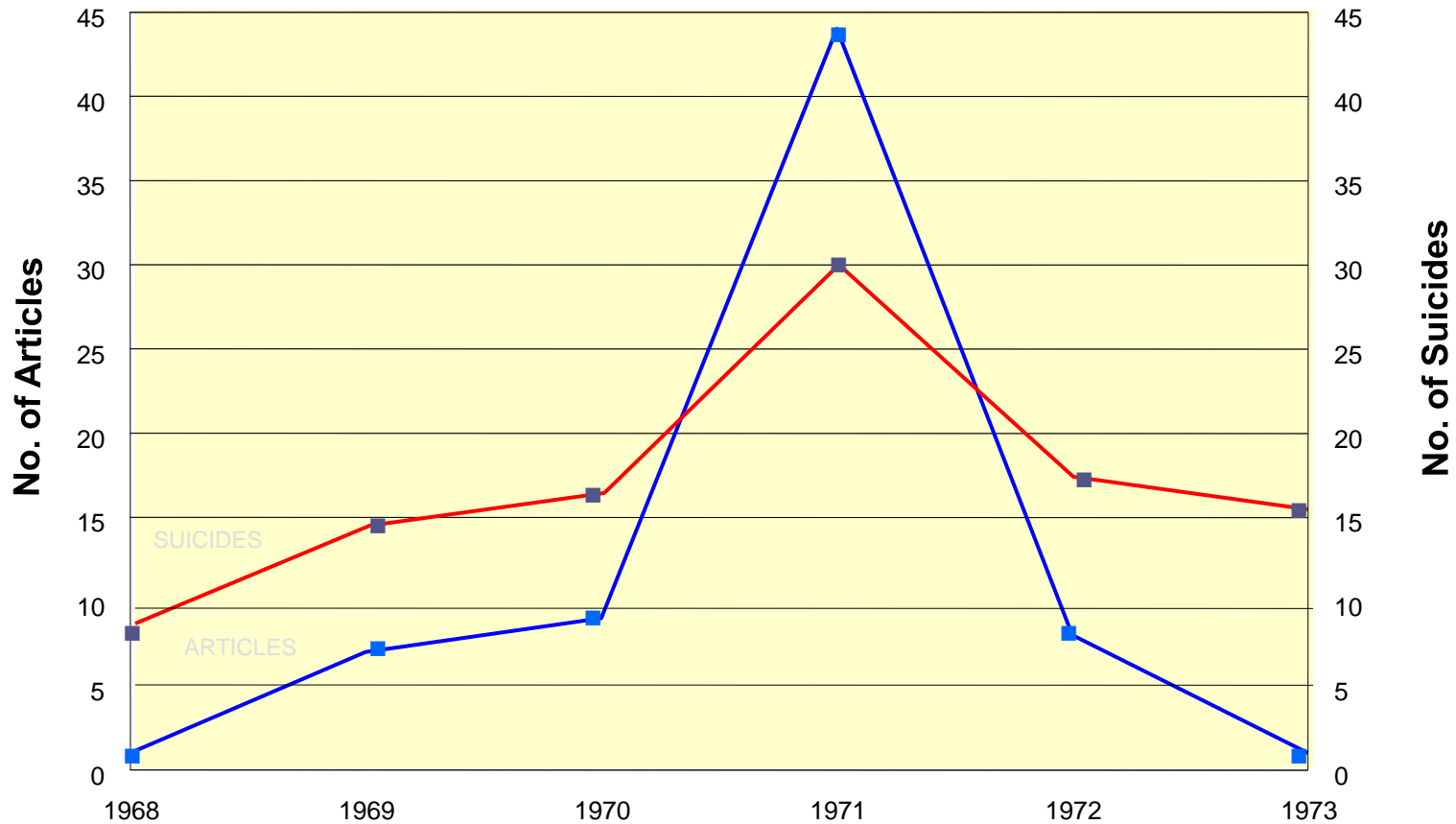


History (1971 to 2006)



Media Protocol

No. of Suicide Related Articles (Toronto Star)
& No. of Suicides



Gatekeeper Program- Suicide Prevention

- Development of a list of behavioural warning signs;
- ASIST Training for operators, supervisors, security and ticket collectors by Trillium Health Centre;
- Slow orders and unsafe platform procedures
- Apprehensions under Mental Health Act

Training identified need for further understanding of acute psychological trauma of workers.

Acute Psychological Trauma Study

- Joint collaboration between the TTC, the Arthur Sommer Rotenberg Chair in Suicide Studies and the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health.
- To develop effective prevention, treatment and return to work approaches for workers at high risk for exposure to acute traumatic events in the workplace.

Goals of Study

- **Recruit** all workers exposed to a traumatic event
- **Refer** to specialized treatment if symptomatic
- **Return to work** safely and early if experiencing lost time
- **Research** and evaluate outcomes
 - Lost-time from work
 - Costs associated with intervention
 - Workers' experience

APT Study Design

- Phase One – Year 1 – May 2008
 - Treatment as Usual (TAU) Group
- Phase Two – Year 2 – June 2009
 - Best Practice Intervention (BPI) Group
- Phase Three – Year 3 – late 2011
 - Data Analysis and Reporting of Findings

Best Practice Intervention (BPI)

- I. Education and training for front-line staff
- II. Systematic screening and monitoring
- III. Timely referral to specialized assessment and treatment
- IV. Trauma-focused psychological care and psychiatric care if required
- V. Coordinated RTW plan with health care providers and the workplace

Treatment to improve recovery

- Direct cooperation with EAP to provide psychological “first aid” and education following traumatic event
- Early initiation of trauma-focused therapy after focused psychological assessment
- Medication management will be available under care of psychiatrist
- Occupational therapist (OT) to assist in on-site treatments to overcome fear and avoidance

RTW Coordination is key

- OT will serve as RTW coordinators
- Direct meeting between OT and Occupational Health to improve communication and clarify process
- Accommodation will be operationalized to facilitate safe and early RTW with the support of managers and union
- Medication review will be provided for employees treated pharmacologically and returning to safety-sensitive positions

Expected Outcomes

- Increased awareness will result in higher numbers of reported incidents
- Lost-time from psychological trauma will reduce
- Cost-savings from recovered lost-time will exceed direct costs of treatment
- Knowledge and experience gained from the intervention will improve disability management of all common health problems affecting TTC workers

CrisisLink

- Partnership between TTC, Bell Canada and Toronto Distress Centres
- Install free autodial telephones on each platform to connect passengers in crisis to the Distress Centre
- Explicit signage
- Approximately 20+ calls monthly, half are high priority

Thinking of suicide?
There is help.
Let's talk.

CRISIS LINK



Use the public telephone located near the **Designated Waiting Area** on this Subway Platform. Just press the blue auto-dial button for a direct line to the **Crisis Link**. It's a free call and it's confidential.

Or call **Distress Centres** anytime at 416-408-HELP(4357).

The **Crisis Link** Subway Platform Telephones are a joint project between:



Bell

The **Crisis Link** is made available to callers who are thinking of suicide and feel they are in immediate need of help. Callers who may be in distress but are not in any immediate danger may be asked to hang up and call **Distress Centres** at 416-408-HELP(4357).

Questions and Concerns

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