

Shock over UWI student's suicide

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UNIVERSITY law student Kimberly Teelucksingh, 24, was no typical girl.

She was strong-minded and strong-willed—a “miniature Hillary Clinton”, says United National Congress (UNC) international affairs officer and former Youth Arm chairman Nicholas Morris.

Teelucksingh committed suicide on Wednesday—the eve of her graduation from The University of the West Indies. Her body was discovered by relatives hanging from a rafter in a bedroom around 5.50 p.m.

Morris said he was contacted by the Princes Town woman back in 2010 when she was an Opposition member of the Trinidad and Tobago Youth Parliament.

“I knew Kimberly. She was a youth parliamentarian. Not in the same time as me. She contacted me, seeing that I was in the Youth Parliament in 2008 and asked for some advice. We started talking and then she said she had a vision to go into politics. At that time I was the UNC Youth Arm chairman, so we start-

ed to discuss politics and one thing that stood out was that not only did she have a vision, but she had ambition and she knew what she was doing. At that point in time, she was actually doing law and she was supposed to graduate today.

“When I saw the status that she had died and it was suicide, what shocked me the most is that as a young woman she was strong-minded and strong-willed, not the typical girl. She was a miniature Hillary Clinton, in a sense,” he said.

Morris said he was gutted by the news because Trinidad and Tobago had lost a future leader, one who would have changed this country.

“She was real strong, so when I heard suicide I was completely gutted because you never know what is going on with people. And if it could affect someone strong as this it could affect anyone,” he said.

Persad-Bissessar: A tragic end

“A tragic end to the life of such a promising young woman.” This was how Leader of the Opposition Kamla Persad-Bissessar, SC, described the death of Teelucksingh.



FOUND DEAD WEDNESDAY:
Kimberly Teelucksingh

“I was deeply saddened to learn of Kimberly’s passing,” Persad-Bissessar said.

“I recall meeting Kimberly during her time as a youth parliamentarian, shortly after I became prime minister in 2010.

“I was struck by her intelligence, drive and determination to succeed, and I applauded her for her resolve to enter the field of politics,” she added.

“On behalf of the Opposition and on my own behalf, I want to extend my deepest sympathy to Kimberly’s family, friends and mentors,” the Opposition Leader said.

Deyalsingh: Look for signs

Noting suicide was the second highest cause of death among young people, secretary of the Association of Psychiatrists Dr Varma Deyalsingh said there needs to be some mechanism for university lecturers to assess their students.

And if it is determined students are stressed or struggling, he said they should be allowed some leniency—maybe time out of examinations.

Teelucksingh was the second university student to die as a result of suicide in the past month.

Deyalsingh said many students were unable to cope with the education system and, more so, pressure from parents and teachers. He said many children were never taught to fail.

Deyalsingh noted the challenge now was to determine why children were seeing suicide as Plan

B, like they have no other option. He urged parents to look for signs—simple things like changes in sleeping patterns, eating habits or personality.

He said children who research ways to die and what happens after death should be monitored. And those who start giving away prized possessions may be considering ending their lives.

He said parents should be open with their children, and discuss rather than punish.

Deyalsingh said children should know there is always someone they can turn to for help. And parents should be willing to discuss relationship issues and independence with their children instead of punishing them.

He said in many cases, children turn to suicide when parents refuse to accept the person they choose to have a relationship with.

He said as children grow older, they yearn for independence, to hang out with friends, “but parents refuse to allow them to go because they are afraid for their safety and children retaliate. Talk to your child. Tell them how you feel instead of argue and punish.”