

Talking to people about your brain injury



AMY STAROSTA, PHD

August 7th, 2019

Objectives

- Identify information to provide to others
- Discuss different people you might talk to about your injury
- Develop scripts for how to talk to others

Your experience so far...



- What has been hard about talking to others?
- What kind of information do you need or want to share?
- What has been helpful?

Sense of Self

```
graph TD; A[Sense of Self] --> B[Egocentric]; A --> C[Sociocentric];
```

Egocentric

inner elements of the self, the uniqueness of the person, and their private sensations, thoughts, attitudes, and felt emotions

Sociocentric

socially oriented, those aspects of the self that are related to our place within a system of social relations (public roles, interpersonal relationships, group status)



Things to consider when deciding what to share

- What is the nature of this relationship?
- How well do I know this person?
- Do I want to share personal information with this person?

Common Symptoms after Brain Injury



- Physical Effects

- Fatigue
- Mobility issues
- Sensory impairment
- Hormonal imbalances
- Weakness or paralysis on one/both sides
- Difficulties with speech
- Spasticity
- Visual problems
- Irregular or uncontrolled movements

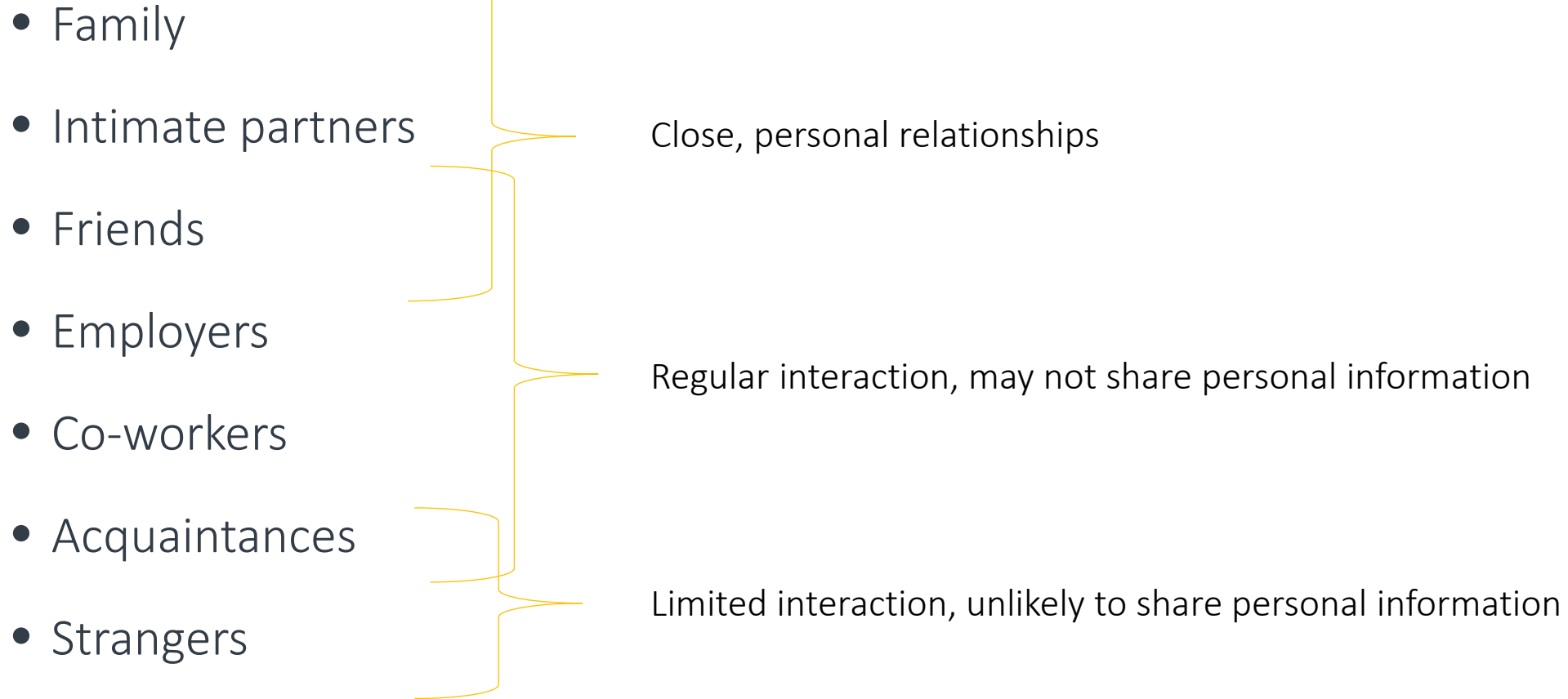
- Cognitive Effects

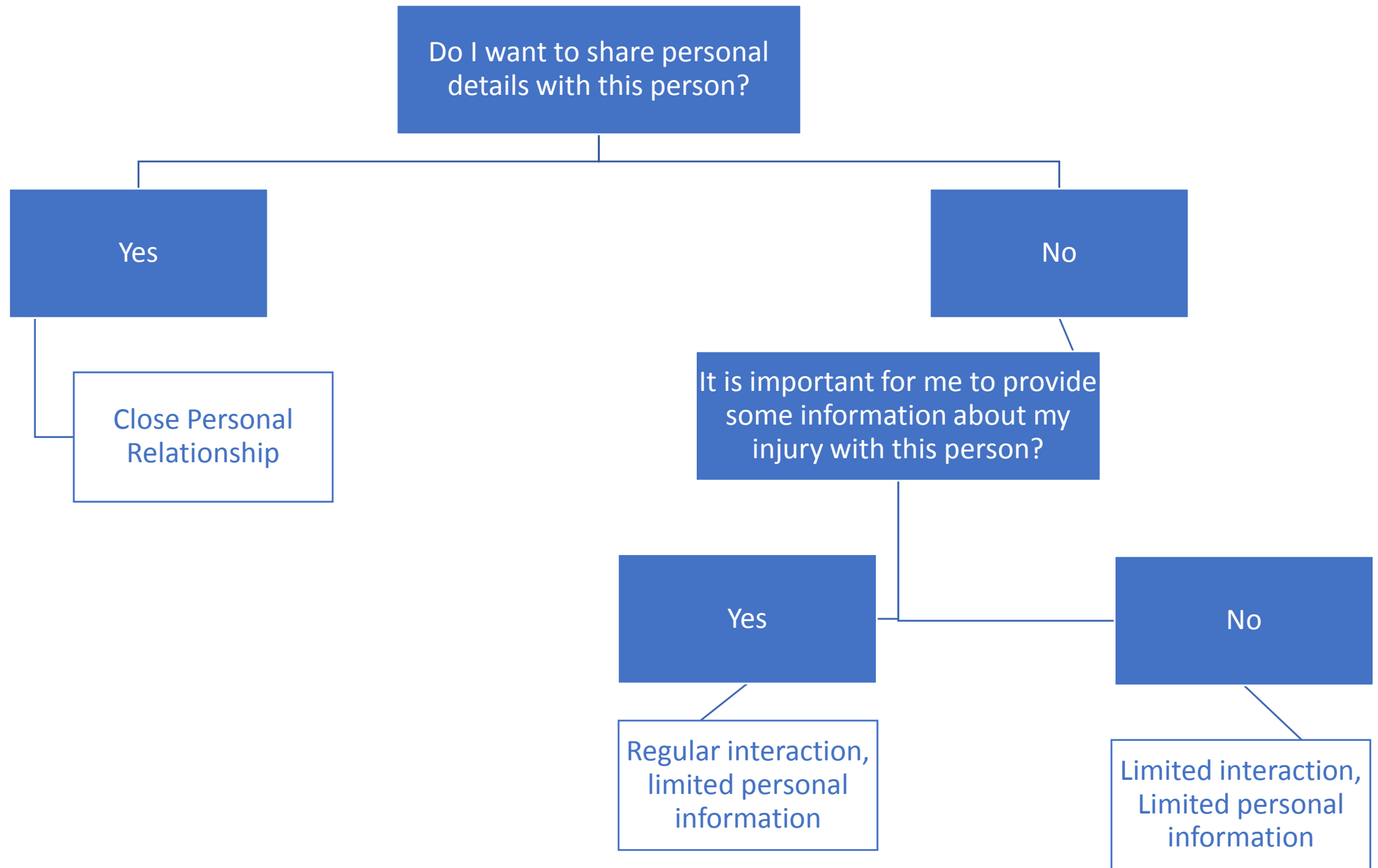
- Memory difficulties
- Reduced concentration
- Reduced problem-solving
- Impaired reasoning
- Impaired visual-perceptual skills
- Problems with motivation
- Reduced information processing
- Repetition or “perseveration”
- Impaired insight or empathy
- Language loss

- Emotional or Behavioral Effects

- Personality changes
- Mood swings
- Loss of confidence
- Depression or grief
- Anxiety
- Impulsiveness
- Frustration or anger
- Disinhibition
- Obsessive behavior

People you may want to talk to about your injury





Close personal relationship



- The goals of these conversations are usually to foster your relationship, to get and give support
 - Since my brain injury, it has been hard for me to _____.
 - I have been feeling _____.
 - It's helpful for me when you _____.
 - I'm still myself, and I still want to _____, I just might need _____.
 - Thank you for understanding and support



Regular interaction, limited personal information

- The goal of these conversations is to convey important and relevant information often to get support, but not to share your personal information.
 - Since my brain injury, I may have more difficulty with _____.
 - It is helpful for me when I have _____.
 - Thank you for your understanding



Limited interaction, limited personal information

- The goals of these conversations are usually to be polite or to navigate a social situation.
 - I had a brain injury.
 - I am doing better now, or I am still recovery
 - Thanks for your concern, or thanks for asking
- Try to keep it brief and respond positively
- If you're uncomfortable, change the subject

Style of Communication

- S – Self Talk: What you say to yourself and believe
- T– Tone of Voice: Use a friendly, warm, and enthusiastic tone of voice
- E– Eye Contact: Look people in the eye, even if just for a few seconds
- P – Posture: Have a confident posture. Keep your head up, your rib cage lifted, and your shoulders back
- S – Smile: A smile makes you look confident and approachable

QUESTIONS?

