

# PATHWAYS

## MOVING BEYOND STROKE AND APHASIA

Susan Adair Ewing, M.A. CCC

Beth Pfalzgraf, M.A. CCC



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WAYNE STATE UNIVERSITY PRESS DETROIT

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99 98 97 96 95 94 5 4 3 2

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**Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data**

Ewing, Susan Adair, 1943—

Pathways : moving beyond stroke and aphasia / Susan Adair Ewing,  
Beth Pfalzgraf.

p. cm. — (William Beaumont Hospital speech and language  
pathology series)

Includes bibliographical references.

ISBN 0-8143-2074-0 (alk. paper). — ISBN 0-8143-2075-9 (pbk. :  
alk. paper)

1. Aphasia—Case Studies. 2. Cerebrovascular disease—Case  
studies. I. Pfalzgraf, Beth, 1955— . II. Title. III. Series.

RC425.E95 1990

616.85'5206—dc20

90-12148

CIP

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**Acknowledgments**

The authors want to thank Dr. Michael Rolnick, series editor and director of the speech and language pathology department, William Beaumont Hospital, Royal Oak, Michigan, for his help and encouragement. Special thanks are due to Dr. Keith Camann, doctor of internal medicine, Lansing, Michigan, who served as medical consultant.

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William Beaumont Hospital  
Speech and Language Pathology Series

MICHAEL I. ROLNICK, PH.D.  
*Series Editor*

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99 98 97 96 95 94 5 4 3 2

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To the courage of those living with the loss of speech and  
language and their families, who took the time  
to share their thoughts, feelings, and often painful memories  
so that others could learn



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# Preface

Stroke is swift, unexpected, and devastating. In its aftermath are feelings of confusion and fear, as the survivors of this illness and their families begin a long struggle through the various stages of recovery. Most, with little, if any, previous exposure to what a stroke is all about, feel alone, unsure of where to turn for help. Many are afraid this illness means resignation and loss of hope, perhaps not aware that “getting better” is more possible now than ever before.

Today, fortunately, the image of stroke is changing away from the picture of helplessness this illness produced years ago. Recovery from a stroke can and does happen, when not so long ago little could be done. Advances in medical science and rehabilitation techniques have made treatment more effective than ever before. Since awareness about strokes is increasing with more information about prevention, medication, and therapies, support for those affected is more readily available. Indeed, hopeless isolation is no longer the future for the survivors.

In the dictionary the word stroke is defined as “a sudden action or process producing an impact”; in medicine this sudden change refers to a disruption in the flow of blood to brain tissue. There are many different reasons a stroke, or cerebral vascular accident (CVA) occurs, as well as many different kinds of strokes. The areas of the brain a stroke affects depends on where the blood supply was interrupted. When this happens in the language area of the brain, most commonly in the left hemisphere, then aphasia, or loss of communication, is the result. Most of us associate this only with loss of the ability to speak, but “communication” also involves listening, thinking, responding, reading, and writ-