Methods:

- IRB approval was obtained.
- Study Design:
  - This was a descriptive study using qualitative methods.
- Study Population:
  - Nurses from the Surgical Trauma Intensive Care Unit at University Hospital in San Antonio, Texas.
  - Non-verbal patients with artificial airways in the Surgical Trauma Intensive Care Unit at University Hospital in San Antonio, Texas.
- A literature review validated the need to improve communication with non-verbal patients because it brought to light the emotional needs that go unmet due to the patient's inability to communicate.
- Staff introduced various communication methods to the patients:
  - Electronic communication board, dry erase communication board, picture boards, and pen & paper.

Results:

Analysis is in progress and categories have been developed for the qualitative coding. Preliminary findings include:

- Non-Verbal Patient's Information Need of Greatest Concern: 71% Very Important.
- Non-Verbal Patient's Feeling of Importance to have a Means to Relay Messages: 24% Important.

Discussion:

Communication is essential in meeting the needs of our patients and should remain a priority focus of nursing.

Post extubation interviews provided a means for patients to communicate their feelings about their experience. During the debriefing session nurses were able to intervene with support services to meet the patient's needs.