**Week 5 Notes CRJ4001**

**Rights for a victim of crime**

Each state has enacted its own set of victim rights. Although some of these rights may vary from state to state, most of the rights remain consistent across different jurisdictions. These rights have been inducted into state constitutions and are law.

Effective law enforcement depends on cooperation from victims of crime. To ensure victims a meaningful role in the criminal justice system and to accord them due dignity and respect, victims of crime are hereby granted the following basic and fundamental rights.

The right to be reasonably protected from the accused.

The right to reasonable, accurate, and timely notice of any public court proceeding or any parole proceeding involving the crime, or of any release or escape of the accused.

The right not to be excluded from any such public court proceeding, unless the court, after receiving clear and convincing evidence, determines that testimony by the victim would be materially altered if the victim heard other testimony at that proceeding.

The right to be reasonably heard at any public proceeding in the district court involving release, plea, sentencing, or any parole proceeding.

The reasonable right to confer with the attorney for the Government in the case.

The right to full and timely restitution as provided in law.

The right to proceedings free from unreasonable delay.

The right to be treated with fairness and with respect for the victim's dignity and privacy (Crime Victims' Rights, n.d.).

**Technology and crime victimization**

Rights of crime victims apply to every type of crime where there is a statute prohibiting a certain type of behavior. Fifty years ago, there was no such thing as Internet crimes or social media. The laws were created as technology evolved.

One of the difficulties in studying criminology and victimology is that the phenomena being studied change over time. Arguably, this is not too different from the medical sciences, because different diseases such as cancer, occurs over time. But medical research has an end goal, while many functionalist criminologists believe that crime will always be there because we will always need to define specific behaviors as outliers to the collective conscience.

There will undoubtedly be a number of changes in crime, victimization, and criminal justice over the next 50 years. One type of crime that is increasing at a monumental rate is cybercrime, which uses computers or networks either as the tools or as the targets for criminal activity.

Law enforcement is undertaking a number of strategies in an attempt to counteract change in crime due to technology and to minimize victimization. Law-enforcement officers are using new nonlethal weapons. They are using computer databases in police cars for tracking criminals.  
They are also using technology for keeping a record of crime data. Indeed, technology would play a leading role in law enforcement and corrections. For instance, law enforcement departments will likely increase the use of technology to detect weapons and contraband, as well as the use of computer databases to identify criminals through fingerprints, Deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA), or even facial features. Many prisons now subject visitors to complete body scans to reduce paraphernalia from being smuggled into the facility.

**Restorative justice**

Restorative justice is a strategy to respond to crime with an approach that focuses on the victim, the offender, and the community. Restorative justice attempts to heal the harm done by crime, particularly the harm done to the relationships between people.

Restorative justice gives victims of a crime an opportunity to explain the impact of the crime on their lives. The victims can expect to get answers to any of their questions about the incident. Restorative justice also gives offenders an opportunity to explain why they committed crimes and how the crimes have affected their lives. The offenders are allowed to make things right for the victims through some form of compensation.

The idea of restorative justice is a blending of many thoughts about justice. Its goal is to simultaneously do what is best for the victim, the offender, and society in general, all at the same time. Restorative justice becomes a weighing process because, obviously, it is difficult to find the perfect penalty that helps all three groups equally. But the idea is to use smart policies that are not rigid and dependent on old ways of thinking meant for another time period. These policies give the judge's discretion in order to do what is best for all involved.

Obviously, restorative justice is not suitable for all types of crimes. It is better suited for property crimes and less serious crimes and also, particularly well-suited for juveniles and other first-time offenders.

Restorative justice is also related to many of the existing policies in the field of criminal justice today. One current policy is community service. This strategy helps offenders gain a sense of "paying back" their debt to society and helps society at the same time. Similarly, restitution helps the victims get their money back.