

## **Felonies and Misdemeanors**

There are different kinds of offenses. Some are much more serious than others are. Felony crimes are more serious than misdemeanor crimes. If you are guilty of a felony, you can be locked up for a much longer time, possibly even until you are an adult.

Some offenses can be either a misdemeanor or felony, depending on how bad the behavior was. A fistfight is one example. If you get into a fistfight you could be charged with misdemeanor assault. If you really hurt someone badly in a fistfight, you could be charged with felony assault.

If you have to go to court, don't be afraid to talk to your lawyer. There may be a trial where the judge hears both sides of the story and then decides if you are guilty. If the judge decides that you are guilty, and the offense is not very serious, you might be put on probation. Then you would have to be on probation and do what the judge and juvenile probation officer say. If the offense is serious or you have been in trouble before, you could be forced to live away from home or even be locked up. Your family can usually visit you if you cannot live at home for a while. You and your family may even go to counseling together to understand how to improve your behavior.

No matter what, even if you do get into trouble, remember it's never too late to change yourself for the better. Don't ever give up on yourself!