

# Talking About Criminal History

- Acknowledge the problem briefly and in terms that put you in a positive light.
  - “In the past, I made bad choices and now I have a felony \_\_\_\_\_ charge.”
- Put the past in the past. Explain how you have overcome problems and learned from mistakes.
  - “I chose to behave in ways that were negative and unhealthy. I have accepted my past and I am ready to start my life again.”
- Don’t give the employer more information than they request. Be brief and end on a note that will lead the interviewer to a more positive subject.
  - “Yes, I was convicted of \_\_\_\_\_. However, while I was incarcerated, I used my time to study and earned my GED.”
- Employers need to know that your past will not cause problems in your future.
  - “I have seen what crime can do to people and I am determined to make positive decisions for my future.”
- Remember that the interviewer is not your judge, jury, or officer. Never try to justify your crime or place blame on anyone else. Accept that you have made mistakes and people will respect your honesty.
- Share the recent choices you have made to improve yourself, such as:
  - Completing treatment for drug and alcohol addictions and maintaining sobriety
  - Completing anger management or domestic violence treatment
  - Completing GED or other training programs while incarcerated
  - Completing or currently working on GED or other training programs
  - Community service and volunteer work
  - Successfully completing probation
- Discuss the benefits the employer can receive for hiring you, such as:
  - The Work Opportunity Tax Credit (National)
  - The Federal Bonding Program (National)
  - Income tax deductions in addition to WOTC (Iowa employers)