



**Magdalene Institutions:  
Recording an Archival and Oral History  
A project funded by the**



## **Topic Guide for Adopted People**

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**Please give your name.**

**Consent to participate:** Before starting the interview, I would like to ask you to confirm that you agree to participate in this interview voluntarily and freely. I would also like to ask you that you are familiar with the information and consent forms that I previously provided to you.

### **Background**

1. Can you tell me something about yourself?
2. Did you hear about Magdalene Institutions when you were young? What did you hear?
3. Can you tell me about your family life?  
*Who raised you?*
4. Before adoption were you placed in any other institution such as a mother and baby home etc)?
5. At what age did you go to your adoptive parents?
6. Did you have any brothers or sisters and if so, were they adopted too?
7. What agency handled your adoption?
8. Growing up, were you aware that your natural mother was in a Magdalene Laundry? If not, how and when did you hear about it?
9. Do you know if your natural mother gave informed consent for your adoption?
10. How has your adoption impacted on your life?
11. Can you tell me about the level of silence surrounding your natural mother's time in the Magdalene Laundry?
12. Was it difficult to find out information?

### **The Adoption Experience: Reunion**

1. Did you reunite with your natural mother? If so when?  
*If your natural mother is still institutionalised when you met her, how do you feel about this? (If living in an institutionalised setting) – did you expect her to be institutionalised? What had you thought about what became of her after your birth?*
2. How did you go about finding her? What was your search experience like? How long did it take?
3. Can you tell me about the reunion?
4. Do you know anything about your natural father? Have you reunited with him?
5. Are you still in contact with your natural mother after the reunion? If so can you tell me the nature of your relationship now?

6. Have you reunited with any siblings you may not be aware that you had? If so, what was this like?
7. Have you met your extended family? If so, can you tell me about this and if not, why haven't you met them?
8. How has this reunion changed your life?
9. Do you have anything else you would like to add?

### **Entry into the laundry**

1. Do you know what laundry your natural mother was in and between which dates?
2. Do you know the circumstances of how she came to be there?
3. Did you have any other known relatives in institutions, (such as Industrial, Reformatory Schools, mother and baby homes and psychiatric hospitals) at the same time?

### **The laundry Regime *(to be asked if contact was made with natural mother)***

1. Do you know anything about the living and working conditions in the Magdalene Laundry? If so, can you tell me as much as you know?
2. Did your natural mother ever tell you of any accidents she or others experienced in the laundry? If so can you tell me about it?
3. Can you tell me how the women who worked in the laundry were disciplined and punished?
4. Was your natural mother beaten or abused during her time in the laundry? If so can you give any details?
5. Did your natural mother speak of anything positive in relation to her time in the institution?
6. How about anything negative?
7. Is there anything else you would like to add?

### **Interacting with Others *(to be asked if contact was made with natural mother)***

1. Do you know if your natural mother had friends in the laundry?
2. Do you know if your natural mother was allowed to leave?
3. Were people allowed to visit?
4. Did you ever visit the laundry? If so can you tell me about it?
5. Can you tell me about your natural mother's interaction with the outside world?
6. Can you tell me what you know about the nuns at the laundry?

### **Leaving *(to be asked if contact was made with natural mother)***

1. Can you tell me anything about your natural mother's leaving experience?
2. Did they manage to leave and if so how did they manage to leave the laundry?

*If she didn't manage to leave and is still alive, is she still in the care of the nuns? Do you see her? What is her life like?*

*If she died in the institution where is she buried? Is her name on the headstone? If not, did this impact on your search experience?*

3. Can you tell me what happened when she left?
4. Do you know what it was like adapting to the outside world for her?

### **The Impact**

1. Can you tell me the impact of her institutionalisation on you and your family?
2. Is it something you talk about freely to others?
3. Do you know the impact your natural mother's institutionalisation had on her in the long term?  
(Both psychologically and her health)?
4. What about the impact of this on your natural mother's relationship with you?
5. How does she feel about her time there?
6. How do you feel about her time there?  
*What is your impression of these institutions?*
7. What was your impression of these institutions before you knew your natural mother was institutionalised in one?

### **Redress and Attitudes**

1. Has your natural mother been given a chance to speak the truth of what happened to her?  
*Did your relative speak about the Magdalene Institutions after she left? Who did she speak with? What did she say?*
2. How open is she about her time in a Magdalene Laundry?
3. How open are you about talking about it?  
*Did she or you ever complain about her treatment there to anyone?*
4. Do you think the State has dealt with the issue of the Magdalene Institutions sufficiently?
5. As the natural child of someone who was in the Magdalene Laundries, what do you want?  
What would you like the state to do?  
*What is it that you would have liked the state to do differently, e.g. to facilitate information?*
6. Who do you think is responsible for your relative's institutionalisation? Why?
7. What is your attitude towards the Church, the State and Irish society in general during the time that these Magdalene Laundries existed?
8. Do you think attitudes have changed since these Laundries were in existence?
9. What impact has this had on your life, and your sense of your own identity?
10. What were the most memorable events in your life?

11. If your mother hadn't been institutionalised, do you think your life would be different? If so, how?
12. Is there anything else you would like to add?