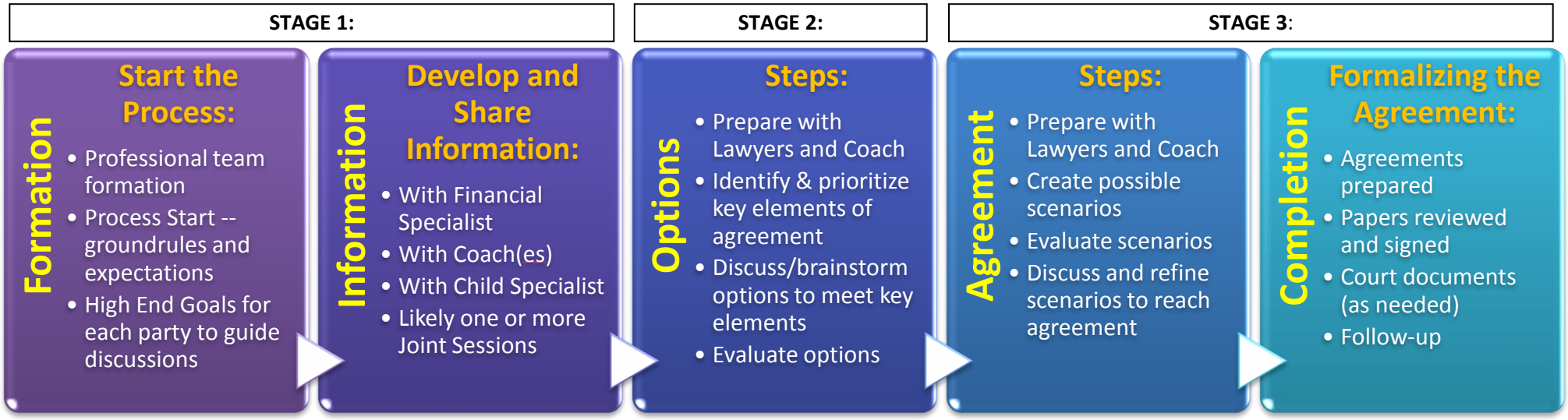
The Collaborative Practice Process Progression



Stage 1 – Formation and Information. The formation phase of Stage 1 lays the foundations for the Collaborative Law process. Initial work is performed to start the process, including the necessary commitments, formation of the professional team, and setting of High End Goals.

The goal of the information phase of Stage 1 is to ensure all participants will have an understanding of the financial, parenting, and legal information, to effectively participate in the process. This phase involves work by the clients to gather information and meet with all of the professionals. After meetings with the financial specialist, coach, and child specialist, there will be at least one joint sessions with both attorneys to discuss the depth and implications of the information as it relates to a larger agreement. It can take some time to do the necessary groundwork of this phase.

Stage 2 – Options. When ready, we move to the Options Stage. This stage has several distinct steps. First, to focus the discussions on the key elements of what an agreement will need to cover– the general components for each party, and any concerns that might need to be addressed. Those components are then often prioritized. Then we discuss and brainstorm possible options that could address what needs to be achieved given the factual information developed in Stage 1. Options are evaluated. The Options Stage usually consists of one to three joint sessions.

Stage 3 -- Agreement and Completion. The Agreement phase of Stage 3 has us addressing identified the key elements with hypothetical agreement scenarios, and then evaluating them. This way everyone understands the implications of various scenarios. The scenarios are then refined and discussions continued until we reach an agreement that addresses everyone's interests. This stage usually consists of one to three joint sessions.

We then enter the completion phase, which includes addressing the final details and formalities needed to conclude the divorce, including preparing and signing agreements and other legal formalities. It is not uncommon for there to be some final fine-tuning of the agreement prior to signing.

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