**Paul Finley’s policies regarding the use of telecommunications technology for psychotherapy**

1. This policy refers to communication and delivery of services via telecommunications technology. It is not limited to use of the internet and may, for example, involve use of the telephone for communication. Examples of telehealth include communication or services delivered via telephone, email, or videochat e.g. Doxy.me.

2. Although the American Counseling Association has recognized telehealth to be an acceptable practice for psychotherapists, there are still many unique challenges associated with its use. While every effort to make electronic communications at least as secure as communications and records in a traditional office environment, there are inherent limitations given the nature of the media involved. There are certain risks to your privacy that are unavoidable when using telehealth. Maintaining confidentiality is a shared responsibility between you and me. I am happy to discuss the precautions I take to ensure the privacy of your information. (Also, refer to my privacy policies, in compliance with the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act and other legal requirements)

3. Although a growing body of research suggests telehealth to be an effective form of treatment, it is still considered an experimental form of treatment. We are using this format of providing treatment because we have agreed that the benefits outweigh the risks (i.e., the benefits of providing treatment in the context of an established therapeutic relationship versus attempting to locate and establish a new treatment relationship with another professional). There are other treatment options, such as in-person psychotherapy, that are well-established by research and proven to be effective. If you ever feel that your treatment needs are not being met through a telehealth modality, please address this directly with me so that we may explore your concerns and alternate ways to meet your treatment goals.

4. While communication and service delivery involving electronic technology has numerous advantages (e.g. safety when there is a chance of spreading disease, convenience, ease of scheduling, availability when both parties are not local), there are risks to privacy and limits of confidentiality when offering services via electronic transmission. Issues like computer viruses, phishing, identity theft, and difficulty maintaining privacy on the Internet, are examples of significant related concerns. In addition, technology may malfunction. Before we begin a videoconferencing session, we will agree to have phone numbers ready as a back-up.

5. For the time period when telehealth services are provided at a distance, it is important that you have a plan established to respond to emergencies that may arise since I cannot be personally present to conduct an evaluation. At a minimum, this involves an agreement to consult the closest emergency room to evaluate your condition if that becomes necessary to protect you or someone else.