

After over a year of remote learning, many schools have started the exciting process of returning to campus. While this is a time for growth and positive change, it is also a time of increased risk, with the unfortunate potential of a school shooting looming.

According to *Education Week*, in the 2020 academic year, during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, there were only ten documented school shootings.¹ March 2020 marked the first March in nearly two decades (since 2002) that there was not a single incident that met criteria for a typical school shooting. As *Washington Post* reporter Robert Klemko puts into perspective, “2002 is the year most current high school seniors were born,” and therefore for many students, this time period was one of the longest stretches in their lifetime without experiencing a school shooting.²

As of July, there have been eight school shootings in 2021 in the United States. *NPR News* reports that we are also seeing a strong uptick in workplace shootings.³ There are many factors to consider with the rise of school and workplace shootings. One of the more obvious factors is the increased access and opportunity that perpetrators have to groups of people now that quarantine restrictions are lifting. Another factor to consider is the effect of isolation on perpetrators over the last year and a half. The toll that the pandemic and being in quarantine has had on everyone’s mental health has been incredibly significant, and this is no different for a potential perpetrator. This prolonged isolation period likely increased these individual’s feelings of disconnectedness from others and hardened their point of view, while simultaneously limiting their access to protective factors such as social or family support, social/political safety, housing stability, religious support, non-violent outlets, and school/work engagement. Lastly, and arguably the most unsettling, factor to consider is the unfettered amount of free time potential perpetrators had during quarantine to focus on planning future attacks. These specific risk factors include fantasy rehearsal of the attack, acquiring or gaining access to weapons, and developing a timeframe and action plan for attacks.

While these facts can feel grim and difficult to process, it is important that we stay mindful and recognize the realities of our climate today. NABITA has been tracking and analyzing these incidents of school and workplace shootings that occurred during the pandemic and more recently as we move into this new, post-pandemic world. We believe it is important to review these incidents and offer some helpful insights and take-aways. In the upcoming weeks, we will begin a Tip of the Week series that will showcase specific case examples of recent school and workplace shootings and how to utilize NABITA’s [Risk Rubric](#) and other assessment tools, such as [ERIS](#), [Looking Glass](#), and [SIVRA-35](#) to support case managers, administrators, and BITS in mitigating risk and assessing threats this upcoming academic year.

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¹ <https://www.edweek.org/leadership/school-shootings-this-year-how-many-and-where/2021/03>

² <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/coronavirus-first-march-without-school-shooting-since-2002-united-states/>

³ <https://www.npr.org/2021/05/27/1000745927/why-were-seeing-a-spike-in-workplace-shootings>