Mental Health Awareness
Reach out to get the help you need

Mental illness refers to a wide range of mental health conditions that include depression, anxiety disorders, schizophrenia, eating disorders and addictive behaviors. In most cases, mental illness symptoms can be managed with a combination of medications and talk therapy (psychotherapy).

**Symptoms of mental illness**
- Feeling sad or down.
- Confused thinking or reduced ability to concentrate.
- Excessive fears or worries, or extreme feelings of guilt.
- Extreme mood changes of highs and lows.
- Withdrawal from friends and activities.
- Significant tiredness, low energy or problems sleeping.

**When to see a doctor**
If you have any signs or symptoms of a mental illness, see your primary care provider or a mental health professional. Most mental illnesses don't improve on their own, and if untreated, a mental illness may get worse over time and cause serious problems.

**If you have suicidal thoughts**
Suicidal thoughts and behavior are common with some mental illnesses. If you think you may hurt yourself or attempt suicide, get help right away:
- Call 911 or your local emergency number immediately.
- Contact a suicide hotline. In the U.S., call or text 988 to reach the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline, available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Or use the Lifeline Chat. Services are free and confidential.
- Seek help from your primary care provider.
- Reach out to a close friend or loved one.
- Contact a minister, spiritual leader or someone else in your faith community.

Suicidal thinking doesn’t get better on its own — so get help.
Superfood of the Month: Fennel

What is it?
Fennel is a flowering plant species in the carrot family. It is a hardy, perennial herb with yellow flowers and feathery leaves. It is indigenous to the shores of the Mediterranean but has become widely naturalized in many parts of the world, especially on dry soils near the sea-coast and on riverbanks. “Anise-flavored” is the term used most often to describe fennel’s flavor— but that doesn’t mean it tastes like a licorice stick. In fact, fresh fennel’s anise factor is delicate and mild.

Why should I eat it?
Both the flavorful, crunchy bulb and aromatic seeds of the fennel plant are highly nutritious and may offer an abundance of impressive health benefits. Adding them to your diet may improve health, reduce inflammation, suppress appetite and even provide anticancer effects. Fennel seeds are believed to have properties that may help alleviate menstrual discomfort and regulate menstrual cycles. They are also known for their digestive properties, especially when eaten at the end of a meal.

What do I do with it?
Fennel has been used to flavor candies, liqueurs, medicines and food. It is especially favored for pastries, sweet pickles and fish. You can eat it raw, roasted, or cooked in salads, stews, soups and pasta dishes. In fact, fennel is often used as the base for flavorful broths that chefs use to braise fish or meats.

Tips for buying and storing
When buying fennel, choose large white bulbs with no discoloration or spots. Since fennel is made up of mostly water, keep this vegetable in the warmer parts of your refrigerator to preserve its texture and flavor. Store whole fennel in the crisper or loosely wrapped in plastic in your fridge. It’s best to use it within a week. Peel away the outer layers as they become wilted or rubbery.
INGREDIENTS
• 2 tablespoons olive oil
• 2 medium onions diced
• 1 large fennel bulb trimmed and diced
• 5 medium garlic cloves minced
• 5 cups chicken stock or vegetable stock
• 45 ounces cans white cannellini beans (divided) 3 cans drained and rinsed
• 1 teaspoon fennel seeds
• 1 teaspoon dried thyme
• 1 sprig fresh rosemary
• sea salt to taste
• croutons, crumbled bacon, or roasted pumpkin seeds optional garnishes

PREPARATION
1. Heat the olive oil in a stock pot over medium-high heat. Add the onions and fennel and cook for about 9 minutes until they are softened and turn golden. Add the garlic and sauté for another minute.
2. Add the chicken stock, about ⅔ of the rinsed beans, the fennel seeds, thyme, and rosemary sprig. Turn the heat up to high and bring the soup to a boil. Then, cover it and reduce the heat to medium-low. Let the soup simmer for about 20 minutes.
3. Remove the rosemary sprig.
4. Using an immersion blender, blend the soup until it’s fairly smooth and creamy. Add the remaining beans, and salt to taste. Cook the soup for another 5 minutes or until it’s heated through.
5. Alternatively, blend the soup in a regular blender in small batches.
6. If desired, serve the soup topped with croutons, crumbled bacon bits, or roasted pumpkin seeds.