If you have SOME knowledge of your teen’s problem, or a SENSE of it at least, and they have given you a small opening, and you sense they are willing to talk, if only a bit, try this:

5 questions to help your teen get to problem-solving ON THEIR OWN. After each question just LISTEN, don’t say much at all! Just nod your head, say “mmmm” and “ yeah” and try to trust they will figure it out. You can modify the questions, or only ask a couple, depending on your teen’s responses and the context of the situation ( how much you already know or don’t know, etc.):

1. Have you ever been in a situation like this before?
2. What did you do?
3. How did it turn out?
4. What are you thinking of trying?
5. What’s your next step?

*or* What’s your plan?

Always stay away from “ Why” questions! ( if possible).

At some point in the conversation, often at the end, try to work in : “ I think you’ll figure it out.”